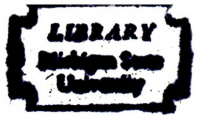
A STUDY OF THE GOTHIC TECHNIQUES IN THE NOVELS OF NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

Thesis for the Degree of Ph. D.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
ROBERT A. KAFTAN

1968



This is to certify that the

thesis entitled

A STUDY OF THE GOTHIC TECHNIQUES IN THE NOVELS OF NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

presented by

Robert A. Kaftan

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Ph. D. degree in English

Date May 1, 1968

ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF THE GOTHIC TECHNIQUES
IN THE NOVELS OF NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

by Robert A. Kaftan

This study attempts to indicate the measure of influence which Gothicism had on Hawthorne through an analysis of the Gothic techniques in each of the novels. The study traces both the imitation and the development of a given set of basic Gothic techniques.

A short historical survey of the Gothic novel in England and its subsequent Americanization provides the foundation for the establishment of three categories of Gothic techniques: atmosphere, plot, and character. Techniques of atmosphere include the settings, the supernatural incursions, and minor devices. Plot techniques include the basic situation of family mystery and guilt and the devices of mistaken identity and suspense. Typical Gothic characterizations are the complex villain-hero and the stereotyped hero and heroine.

According to the framework of these three categories of Gothic techniques, the following conclusions can be demonstrated for each of Hawthorne's novels. Hawthorne imitated the Gothic novel very closely in Fanshawe with Sir Walter Scott as the principal model. In The Scarlet Letter,

Robert A. Kaftan

Hawthorne used the fear-inducing capabilities of Gothic techniques to reinforce the moral theme. Hawthorne successfully adapted the techniques to present a Gothic tale in urban American surroundings in The House of the Seven Gables. Hawthorne depended least on Gothic techniques in The Blithedale Romance, in which the narrative method and the "spiritualistic" subplot are the principal examples of Gothicism. In The Marble Faun, Hawthorne used Gothic techniques in their native settings for the first time with little adaptation. Gothic techniques dominated Hawthorne's own contributions in the uncompleted fragments.

Two general conclusions may be drawn from the study of the Gothic techniques in the novels. Hawthorne depended upon Gothic techniques at the beginning and at the end of his career, whereas in the middle novels he successfully incorporated the techniques into the larger framework of each novel. In terms of the three categories of Gothic techniques, Hawthorne made important advances in two areas: he raised the level of the supernatural incursion to symbolic complexity, an expression of the ambiguity of the supernatural; and he deepened with psychological penetration the characterizations of the hero and the heroine. These conclusions support the thesis that Hawthorne adapted and developed Gothic techniques to render them influential beyond their usefulness in the Gothic novel itself.

A STUDY OF THE GOTHIC TECHNIQUES IN THE NOVELS OF NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

By

Robert A. Kaftan

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of English

1968

PREFACE

Two courses taken concurrently at Michigan State University first suggested the possibility of a study of the Gothic techniques in Hawthorne's novels. A course in the Eighteenth Century Novel offered by Professor Arthur Sherbo provided the necessary background in the development of the Gothic novel. A reading course in Hawthorne under the supervision of Professor C. David Mead focused my attention on the Gothic parallels in Hawthorne's novels. It was Professor Mead himself who first pointed out the wealth of Gothic elements contained in Fanshawe.

The happy coincidence of the Gothic cropping up in both courses sent me to the library to check on the critical studies of Gothicism in Hawthorne. I discovered that the treatment of this topic was scattered at best and concentrated mostly on the short stories. With the idea of a disciplined study of the Gothic elements in all of Hawthorne's novels, I set to work.

For assistance during my research, I am indebted to Professor Sherbo who helped me compile a list of essential primary and secondary sources on the Gothic novel, to Professor Mead both for the original inspiration and for positive criticism throughout the research and writing, and to

the other members of my committee, Professors Elwood P. Lawrence and Sam S. Baskett, who offered equally helpful criticism on organization and style. It would be ungrateful of me to omit the debt of gratitude I owe Professor Thomas R. Gorman of Loyola University (Chicago) who encouraged me to go on to graduate school and to embark on a career in teaching, a career which has already garnered me more rewards than I could reasonably hope for in a lifetime. Lastly, I must thank my typist, Mrs. Jean Lundahl, who offered invaluable help on matters of form and general correctness of copy.

Robert A. Kaftan

A Note on Editions Cited

Wherever possible, I have chosen to use the volumes of the Ohio State University Press Centenary Edition, eds. William Charvat, et al., of Nathaniel Hawthorne's novels. References to these volumes will include only volume and page number. For those novels not yet published in this authoritative edition, I have reverted to the Riverside edition, The Complete Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, ed. George Parsons Lathrop, 13 vols. (Boston and New York, 1882-83). References to these volumes will be prefixed with an "R".

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

THE GOTHIC NOVEL AND ITS TECHNIQUES

1.

My specific purpose in this chapter is threefold: to trace the development of the Gothic novel in England; to classify the techniques which the Gothic novel employs; and to demonstrate the Americanization of Gothic techniques in the novelists who preceded Hawthorne, Brown and Cooper.

Technically, the history of the Gothic novel begins with the publication of The Castle of Otranto in 1764; but the English Zeitgeist for at least twenty-five years had been providing a sympathetic atmosphere for the appearance of this kind of novel. The principal non-literary sign was the renewed interest in Gothic architecture which came to symbolize "the novelty of extravagance which were [sic] originally the inspiration of Gothic artists."[1] The extravagance as manifested in Gothic architecture was a metonymy for an interest in the Medieval period, a marked reaction to the classicism of the early part of the eighteenth century. The general taste for the Medieval period provided the necessary impetus for the Gothic novel itself. Varma lists

[1] Devendra Varma, The Gothic Flame (London, 1957), p. 14.

several areas in which the awakened appreciation for the Medieval and Renaissance periods inspired the Gothic novel: the landscapists, Claude Lorrain, Salvator Rosa, Nicolas Poussin; supernatural episodes in the narrative structure of the ballad; the traditional lore of heathen Europe; the revival of Elizabethan drama; and the resurrected reputations of Spenser and Milton.[2]

Preceding Horace Walpole's The Castle of Otranto in the specifically literary form, the graveyard poets, and the novelists, Tobias Smollett and Thomas Leland, are among those writers who anticipate devices which become intimately connected with the Gothic novel. Edward Young of the School of Graveyard Poets, for example, in "The Complaint, or Night Thoughts" (1742) evokes the atmosphere of gloom of which Gothic novelists are fond:

> From short (as usual) and disturbed repose,
> I wake: how happy they who wake no more!
> Yet that were vain, if dreams infest the grave.
> I awake, emerging from a sea of dreams
> Tumultuous; where my wrecked desponding thought
> From wave to wave of fancied misery
> At random drove, . . .
> Night, sable goddess! from her ebon throne,
> In rayless majesty now stretches forth
> Her leaden scepter o'er a slumbering world.
> Silence, how dead! and darkness, how profound!
> (11. 6-12; 18-21)

Tobias Smollett in Ferdinand Count Fathom, which first appeared in 1753, defends in the preface the device of terror

[2]pp. 24-31.

as a worthy function in the novel, places scenes in gloomy, deserted forests, and includes incidents amidst graves; and Thomas Leland's Longsword, Earl of Salisbury, published two years earlier than Walpole's novel, "has all the ingredients of the Gothic-Historical Romance except supernatural machinery."[3]

These examples indicate a certain literary trend toward romanticism which prepared for the Gothic novel itself. When Walpole wrote The Castle of Otranto, both his own predisposition as a Medievalist and the literary milieu inclined toward the development of a genre of fiction which would depart from the classicism of the earlier eighteenth century and from the bourgeois realism of the novels of Richardson and Fielding. Walpole dipped into the well of Richardsonian sentimentalism, but he also returned to the Medieval romances whose characters were noble and whose incidents were often extraordinary or supernatural. Scarcely twenty-five years after Richardson, Walpole reintroduced material which had so recently been banished from the realistic novel.

The return to material from Medieval romance apparently troubled Walpole because The Castle of Otranto appeared under a pseudonym. It was not until the book had become a success that Walpole admitted authorship. In the preface to

[3]Varma, pp. 39-40.

the second edition, he confessed that his intention was to blend the old and the new romances, that is, to fuse the Medieval romance with the realistic novel. From the old romances, he took their improbability and imagination; from the new romances, the imitation of nature.[4] A more concrete list of influences on Walpole given by Varma includes elements from the heroic romance, the fairy tale, and the Oriental tale in combination with the traits of excessive sensibility, exemplary piety, and the explicit moral borrowed from the new romance.[5]

This new fusion caught fire, and The Castle of Otranto began a whole stream of novels directly dependent on it as a model. Three types of novel develop from The Castle of Otranto. The first type, the Novel of Terror,[6] includes the work of Walpole himself, Clara Reeve, and Ann Radcliffe. The second type, the Novel of Horror, a somewhat later development, includes among its practitioners Matthew Lewis and Charles Maturin. The third type, the Historical Gothic, has as its principal examplar Sir Walter Scott.

From the vantage point of the twentieth century, the novels of the School of Terror seem quite tame; the plot and

[4]The Castle of Otranto (London, 1964), p. 7.

[5]pp. 46-50.

[6]The general names given the Schools of Gothicism are the common critical terminology among scholars of the Gothic novel, viz. Railo, Summers, and Varma.

the characters are predictable, and the supernatural occurrences are hardly frightening. The Castle of Otranto, for example, deals with the restoration of a castle to its proper owner. The major characters, Manfred, the usurper, Theodore, the rightful owner, and Isabella, his beloved, play out their assigned roles as villain, hero, and heroine. What renders the novel individual as the origin of a sub-genre of the novel form is the setting, which is primarily the castle. The castle is the major factor in giving the Gothic novel its individual difference from the familiar novels of the mid-eighteenth century. J. M. S. Tompkins states that the "basis of Otranto is architectural and in this respect it is the true starting-point of the Gothic romance."[7] Walpole, a fancier of Gothic architecture, had built Strawberry Hill in imitation of a Medieval castle. Walpole's own surroundings influenced the creation of his fictional castle. He was able in The Castle of Otranto successfully to create "an atmosphere of mystery, gloom, and terror, through his specialized settings, machinery, character types, theme, plot, or technique."[8] In a general list Tompkins gives the characteristics of The Castle of Otranto which become the hallmarks of the School of Terror writers:

[7]The Popular Novel in England 1770-1800 (Lincoln, 1961), p. 226.

[8]Varma, p. 58.

a. "feudal arrangement" of the castle, vault, caverns, and church
b. mystery with hints and interrupted confessions
c. heroine's flight and its suspense
d. supernatural incursion
e. Manfred (Gothic hero) with his guilt and defiance
f. garrulous servants.[9]

These characteristics accurately describe Clara Reeve's The Old English Baron, published in 1778 and written in imitation of Walpole's novel. Her novel also deals with the restoration of hereditary rights to their proper owner. Plot and character do not differ greatly from Walpole's novel, but Reeve limits herself to only one supernatural occurrence at the novel's climax. She does, however, introduce a new device, the deserted wing of the castle.[10]

Ann Radcliffe refined Walpole's techniques to the degree that her novels may be spoken of as "not a story, nor a character, nor a moral truth, but a mood, the mood of a sensitive dreamer before Gothic buildings and picturesque scenery."[11] Radcliffe creates the atmosphere of her novels through suggestion and suspense, not through statement and action. The terrible, always suggested, seldom happens; it is only a real possibility, but never reality itself. In comparison with Walpole, Radcliffe can be distinguished precisely by this

[9]p. 226.

[10]Tompkins, p. 230.

[11]Tompkins, p. 255.

> preponderance of atmosphere over passion, or, rather, this reduction of passion to be no more than a component part of the atmosphere, which, together with the fact that we never behold the naked form of terror, but always its image, obscurely reflected in the victim's mind, differentiates Mrs. Radcliffe's books from Walpole's Castle of Otranto, . . .[12]

Edith Birkhead agrees with Tompkins' opinion on the importance of atmosphere which, Birkhead maintains, successfully overcomes glaring plot weaknesses.[13]

To create atmosphere in her books, Mrs. Radcliffe relied heavily on descriptions of nature. She was fond of grand and imposing scenery which reflected, she felt, divine grandeur.[14] The scenery served as an ever-present background element; but it was not rendered exactly, Mrs. Radcliffe having never visited the locales in which she set her novels. Instead, she used descriptions that she had read in travel-books.[15]

Besides emphasizing the scenic elements for atmospheric effects, Mrs. Radcliffe contributed the principle of the "explained supernatural," by which she treats extraordinary occurrences in such a way that they only appear to be supernatural, but can be satisfactorily explained by

[12]Tompkins, p. 253.

[13]The Tale of Terror (New York, 1921), p. 42.

[14]Alida A. Wieten, Mrs. Radcliffe--Her Relation Toward Romanticism (Amsterdam, 1926), pp. 44, 52.

[15]Birkhead, p. 60.

rational means.[16] For example, in The Mysteries of Udolpho, Radcliffe explains the "Mystery of the Black Veil":

> It may be remembered, that, in a chamber of Udolpho hung a black veil, whose singular situation had excited Emily's curiosity, and which afterwards disclosed an object, that had overwhelmed her with horror; for, on lifting it, there appeared, instead of the picture she had expected, within a recess of the wall, a human figure of ghastly paleness, stretched at its length, and dressed in the habiliments of the grave. What added to the horror of the spectacle, was, that the face appeared partly decayed and disfigured by worms, which were visible on the features and hands . . . Emily, it may be recollected, had, after the first glance, let the veil drop, and her terror had prevented her from ever after provoking a renewal of such suffering, as she had then experienced. Had she dared to look again, her delusion and her fears would have vanished together, and she would have perceived, that the figure before her was not human, but formed of wax.[17]

Interestingly enough, Mrs. Radcliffe allows only the reader to know the explanation; Emily herself never learns that the figure is wax.

Walpole, Reeve, and Radcliffe established the basic techniques which characterize the Gothic novel. Primary among the techniques is the atmosphere which is the necessary concomitant of the kind of effect which these writers wish to achieve. Mystery and suspense are impossible without the background atmosphere in which they can be real possibilities. Furthermore, supernatural occurrences are

[16]Eino Railo, The Haunted Castle (London, 1927), p. 324.

[17]The Mysteries of Udolpho (London, 1966), p. 662.

more successfully integrated into the plot with the aid of a proper atmospheric setting.

The later group of Gothic novelists took the Walpole model as the foundation of their own work, but they were discontented with what they considered the half-way measures of the School of Terror. These School of Horror writers exaggerated the inherent elements of mystery and the supernatural to produce works which shock by their brutality. The following quotations from Varma indicate the trend taken by the School of Horror:

> [the School of Horror authors] wrote stories of black-magic and lust, of persons in pursuit of the elixir vitae, of insatiable curiosity and unpardonable sins, of contact with the devil, of those who manufacture monsters in their laboratories, tales of skull-headed ladies, of the dead arising from their graves to feed upon the blood of the innocent and beautiful, or walk about in the halls of Eblis, carrying their burning hearts in their hands.[18]

This passage points out the exaggeration and intensification of the content; the School of Horror writers also enlarged the possibilities in the repertoire of Gothic techniques:

> Earlier Gothic machinery included flickering candles, glimmering and disappearing lights, haunted chambers, mysterious manuscripts, obscure heroes and other similar properties. But the "intense" school of "Monk" Lewis introduced stalking specters, devils, evil spirits, sorcerers and demons, magic mirrors, enchanted wands, phosphorescent glow and other paraphernalia associated with black magic. Here Spanish grandees, heroines of dazzling beauty, bravos and forest banditti, foolish duennas and gabbing domestic

[18] p. 131.

> servants, monks, nuns, inquisitors, move in a world of midnight incantations, poisonings, stabbings, and ministrations of sleeping potions; in an atmosphere of thunder, lightning, storm, sulphurous fumes, and miracles.[19]

Matthew Lewis and Charles Maturin may be considered the major exponents of the School of Horror novel. The former, influenced by German imitators of Walpole, produced The Monk in 1797, a novel which attained a success which Lewis could never again recapture. The novel does not merely suggest the mysterious and the horrible; it describes them in great detail. Eino Railo calls the novel "pitiless and tastelessly detailed realism."[20] Lewis also introduces the theme of the Faustian compact, by which a man gives his soul over to the devil for earthly power, a theme which the earlier writers had not explored, but one which deepens the potentiality for horror in the Gothic novel.

Charles Maturin, whose novel Melmoth the Wanderer appeared at the end of the Gothic novel's vogue in 1820, not only utilizes the Faustian theme, but combines it with the theme of the Wandering Jew, a man doomed to search the earth to win over human souls to the devil's power. Very intricately structured, the novel details the horrors of the insane asylum, of the Inquisition, of betrayed lovers buried alive, and of the suffocating enclosure within religious

[19]Varma, p. 143.

[20]p. 139.

cloisters. Maturin's novel most clearly reflects the anti-Catholic prejudice which Montague Summers discusses as being part of the philosophical foundation of the Gothic novel.[21] Maturin's unique ability lay in his fusion of the Lewis brand of School of Horror techniques with the sensibility typical of the School of Terror, most particularly exemplified by Mrs. Radcliffe.[22] Melmoth the Wanderer perhaps best illustrates the aims and the methods of the Gothic novel. Taking advantage of all previous models, Maturin successfully unites the different strains of the genre to produce a novel which can still frighten a twentieth century reader.

The final developmental phase of the Gothic novel is the historical romance. This form of the genre added historical accuracy as its major contribution. A given set of mysterious and suspenseful incidents now took place at a given locale in a given time. Scott's novels contain appendices citing elaborately detailed historical backgrounds attesting to the accuracy of the dramatized events. For example, Scott discusses the living model of the astrologer upon whom Guy Mannering is based and the original of the grave tender in Old Mortality. Ghosts and smugglers, pallid young lovers, long-lost heirs, and frightening encounters on deserted moors are the stuff of Scott's novels. The Bride

[21]The Gothic Quest (New York, 1961), pp. 194-195.

[22]Varma, p. 160.

of Lammermoor in particular virtually approximates the atmosphere of gloom and mystery of a typical Radcliffe novel.

2.

This brief historical survey of the Gothic novel provides a basis for a categorization of those techniques which are common to all forms of the genre in order to relate the transformation of these techniques to the American novel as a whole and to Hawthorne's novels in particular. These common techniques must furthermore be categorized in order to render them capable of being discussed and related to the method by which Hawthorne fits them to his novels. The categories into which I propose to organize the techniques of the Gothic novel are three: atmosphere, plot, and character. None is mutually exclusive since, obviously, all three combine with other components, such as diction and theme, to produce the unity of any given novel; but each category is distinct enough to encompass certain kinds of techniques to which each succeeding Gothic novelist returns. A descriptive list of the techniques of each category will provide the foundation upon which I will discuss the reappearance of these techniques in Hawthorne's novels.

As the nature of the descriptions of various Gothic novels has indicated, the single most distinguishing feature of the Gothic novel is its atmosphere. Foremost among the

objects which the Gothic novelists use to create atmospheric effects is the castle. Critics have pointed out the close relationship between the origination of the Gothic novel and architecture; and nowhere is this connection more apparent than in the eminence of the castle as the integral part of the structure of almost every Gothic novel. Varma, for example, calls the castle the true hero of Walpole's novel.[23] Eino Railo, generalizing on the centrality of the castle as an atmospheric technique, states:

> The reader quickly observes that [the] "haunted castle" plays an exceedingly important part in these romances; so important, indeed, that were it eliminated the whole fabric of romance would be bereft of its foundations and would lose its predominant atmosphere.[24]

Both Montague Summers in The Gothic Quest[25] and J. M. S. Tompkins[26] reinforce this opinion in their accessions to the close identification of the castle to the fundamental meaning of the Gothic novel. A passage from The Mysteries of Udolpho which describes Emily's first arrival at Montoni's habitat demonstrates the use of the castle for the evocation of a frightening atmosphere:

> Emily gazed with melancholy awe upon the castle, which she understood to be Montoni's; for, though it

[23] p. 57.

[24] p. 7.

[25] p. 189.

[26] p. 227.

> was now lighted up by the setting sun, the gothic greatness of its features, and its mouldering walls of dark grey 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, as the thin vapour crept up the mountain, while the battlements above were still tipped with splendour. From those too, the rays soon faded, and the whole edifice was invested with the solemn duskiness of evening. Silent, lonely, and sublime, it seemed to stand the sovereign of the scene, and to frown defiance on all, who dared to invade its solitary reign.
>
> . . . she anxiously surveyed the edifice: but the gloom, that overspread it, allowed her to distinguish little more than a part of its outline, with the massy walls of the ramparts, and to know, that it was vast, ancient, and dreary. From the parts she saw, she judged of the heavy strength and extent of the whole. The gateway before her, leading into the courts, was of gigantic size, and was defended by two round towers, crowned by overhanging turrets, embattled, where, instead of banners, now waved long grass and wild plants, that had taken root among the mouldering stones, and which seemed to sigh, as the breeze rolled past, over the desolation around them. The towers were united by a curtain, pierced and embattled also, below which appeared the pointed arch of a huge portcullis, surmounting the gates: from these, the walls of the ramparts extended to other towers, overlooking the precipice, whose shattered outline, appearing on a gleam, that lingered in the west, told of the ravages of war.--Beyond these all was lost in the obscurity of evening.[27]

This description is sufficiently indistinct to suggest the mystery and the fear of the castle; and the passage aptly exemplifies a Gothicist's manipulation of words to invest the novel with the proper atmosphere.

The accoutrements of the castle add further possibilities for the development of a gloomy or frightening

[27]Radcliffe, pp. 226-227.

atmosphere. These include the castleyard and chapel, the nearby monastery or nunnery, and, above all, the vaults and subterranean passages beneath the castle. Some occasion usually prompts the heroine to descend into the mysterious passage to escape the villain. In the following quotation from The Castle of Otranto, Isabella attempts to flee from Manfred:

> The lower part of the castle was hollowed into several intricate cloisters; and it was not easy for one under so much anxiety to find the door that opened into the cavern. An awful silence reigned throughout those subterranean regions, except now and then some blasts of wind that shook the doors she had passed, and which grating on the rusty hinges were re-echoed through that long labyrinth of darkness.[28]

The darkness and the eerieness of these underground caverns contribute greatly to the atmospheric effects desired by the Gothicists.

A special complement to the architecture is the natural scenery to evoke atmospheric effects. As I have noted above,[29] Mrs. Radcliffe most enthusiastically responds to the atmospheric possibilities inherent in the natural surroundings. She, as most other Gothicists, preferred Mediterranean countries as locales; and the countryside in her novels is inevitably majestic, mountainous, and deeply wooded.[30] Mrs.

[28]Walpole, p. 25.

[29]See p. 7.

[30]Railo, p. 12.

Radcliffe uses nature in the manner made common by the Romantics; but it is she alone among the Gothic novelists, save for Scott, who depends upon extensive descriptions of scenery to deepen the atmospheric effects.

The technique which is most generally thought to typify the Gothic novel is the supernatural incursion. The early Gothic novelists, however, were afraid that the bourgeois reading public would receive these supernatural episodes negatively.

Walpole in the first (anonymous) edition of The Castle of Otranto elaborately defends the inclusion of the supernatural:

> Miracles, visions, necromancy, dreams, and other preternatural events are exploded now even from romances. That was not the case when our author wrote [1529], much less when the story itself was supposed to have happened. Belief in every kind of prodigy was so established in those dark ages, that an author would not be faithful to the manners of the times who should omit all mention of them. He is not bound to believe them himself, but he must represent his actors as believing them.[31]

Clara Reeve, like Walpole, was not convinced of the feasibility of the supernatural. In the preface to The Old English Baron, she censured Walpole's reliance on this technique:

> . . . [The Castle of Otranto] is an attempt to unite the various merits and graces of the ancient Romance and modern Novel. To attain this end, there

[31] p. 4.

> is required a sufficient degree of the marvellous to excite the attention; enough of the manners of real life, to give an air of probability to the work, and enough of the pathetic, to engage the heart in its behalf.
>
> The book we have mentioned is excellent in the last two points, but has a redundancy in the first. The opening excites the attention very strongly; the conduct of the story is artful and judicious; the characters are admirably drawn and supported; the diction polished and elegant; yet, with all those brilliant advantages, it palls on the mind (though it does not upon the ear); and the reason is obvious--the machinery is so violent, that it destroys the effect it is intended to excite. Had the story been kept within the utmost verge of probability, the effect had been preserved, without losing the least circumstance that excites or detains the attention.[32]

Reeve presented only one supernatural episode, thereby assuring the maximum plausibility--at least in her own terms.

Obviating objections, Mrs. Radcliffe introduced the "explained supernatural."[33] She instead relied on drawing out the expectation of the supernatural in a suspenseful manner, rather than on a presentation of the supernatural itself. Suspense substitutes for action as an atmospheric device in relation to Mrs. Radcliffe's treatment of the supernatural.

Unconcerned with plausibility or even with the reading public's reception, the School of Horror writers introduce the supernatural into their novels without defense or explanation. For example, the devil himself appears at the

[32](London, 1820), pp. 4-5.

[33]See pp. 7-8.

climax of The Monk to complete his compact with Ambrogio. This appearance of the demonic being and, indeed, the inclusion of the supernatural throughout this novel and Melmoth the Wanderer is indicative of the unambivalent acceptance of the supernatural as part of the fabric of the Gothic novel. For the School of Horror writers as well as for Sir Walter Scott, the supernatural was an atmospheric technique which they could conveniently employ.

Other techniques which contribute to the atmosphere of a Gothic novel are listed by various critics of the genre.[34] What these techniques consist of are a group of props, natural and artificial, which deepen the mystery of the surroundings or the situation. Such props include the hidden manuscript, the ancestral portrait, a sudden storm, a shaft of moonlight, a gust of wind. These techniques may be scarcely noticed within the larger context of the more bizarre occurrences in a Gothic novel; but by simple accretion, they heighten suspense, increase tension, or, more practically, keep the plot moving. In this latter sense, they may be equally considered as an adjunct to the techniques of plot. Another example from The Castle of Otranto, which directly follows the passage quoted above, indicates the typical use of these props:

[34]Varma, pp. 57-59; Tompkins, p. 226; Railo, pp. 7-12; Summers, p. 129; Jane Lundblad, Nathaniel Hawthorne and European Literary Tradition (Cambridge, 1947), pp. 81-88.

> . . . believing by what she [Isabella] could observe, that she was near the mouth of the subterranean cavern, she approached the door that had been opened; but a sudden gust of wind that met her at the door extinguished her lamp, and left her in total darkness.
>
> Words cannot paint the horror of the princess's situation. . . .[35]

A second example from Melmoth the Wanderer concerns the discovery of a hidden manuscript:

> . . . he [the young Melmoth] resolutely entered the closet, shut the door, and proceeded to search for the manuscript. It was soon found, . . . The manuscript, old, tattered, and discoloured, was taken from the very drawer in which it was mentioned to be laid. Melmoth's hands felt as cold as those of his dead uncle, when he drew the blotted pages from their nook. He sat down to read,--there was a dead silence through the house. . . .
>
> . . . the sound of the clock striking made him start,--it was the only sound he had heard for some hours, and the sound produced by inanimate things, while all living beings around are as dead, have at such an hour an effect indescribably awful. John looked at his manuscript with some reluctance, opened it, paused over the first lines, and as the wind sighed round the desolate apartment, and as the rain pattered with a mournful sound against the dismantled window, wished . . . the sound of the window less dismal, and the dash of the rain less monotonous.[36]

Maturin includes not only the manuscript, but the rainstorm and the wind to surround his character with a gloomy, frightening atmosphere.

The devices of atmosphere are perhaps the most individuating feature of the Gothic novel; but the elements of

[35]Walpole, p. 26.

[36](Lincoln, 1961), pp. 20-21.

plot and character are necessary to embody these devices. The discussions of plot and character will be concerned with prototypes which with minor changes in emphasis serve for all the novelists from Walpole to Scott.

Two critics offer generalizations which form a pattern for the typical plot of the Gothic novel: "an act of usurpation and fraternal hate and the unravelling of the consequences of these"[37] and "the restoration to hereditary rights of an unknown and defrauded heir by means of supernatural agents on behalf of divine justice."[38] Both of these precis are particularly relevant to the novels of the School of Terror. In essence, the summaries describe the plot situation in which the forces of evil act and the forces of good react. It is the good-evil conflict with the predictable victory of the good. The supernatural in the earlier Gothic novels is an extension of the good, signifying that, without question, the forces of good will prevail.

The later Gothicists, Lewis and Maturin, although maintaining the form of the good-evil conflict, complicate the plot structure by introducing the themes of the Satanic compact, the Wandering Jew myth, and overt sexual perversion. The supernatural becomes a less certain symbol of the good; black magic and witchcraft take their places alongside the

[37]Railo, p. 34.

[38]Varma, p. 60.

supernatural as a manifestation of the divine will. The introduction of supernatural evil allows the battle to become more equal, although poetic justice ultimately operates.

The third element, character, is equally adaptable into basic types which recur throughout the history of the genre. There are three primary character types and one group of secondary types. The three most important characters in any Gothic novel are traditional: the hero, the heroine, and the villain. The secondary characters are the domestics, the religious, and the outlaws.

The Gothicists were ambivalent in relation to their characters, especially to the villain, who often attains the proportions of the true hero of the novel. He, as the personification of the forces of evil, embodies the complexity and the struggle necessary to produce a vital, three-dimensional characterization.

The most extensive treatment of the hero-villain appears in Eino Railo's The Haunted Castle. He distinguishes between two types of villain: the first appearing in Walpole and Radcliffe (except for The Italian); the second appearing in Lewis and Maturin. The earlier type of villain, examples of whom are Manfred and Montoni, exhibits four major characteristics: (1) a lonely, stalwart, saturnine man of beautiful countenance; (2) a man plagued by severe, internal spiritual struggles; (3) a man independent by reason of intelligence, strength of will, and the volcanic nature of his

passions; and (4) a man with the vision of the superhuman, a dominating passion of great intensity, this trait a special addition of Mrs. Radcliffe's.[39] Two descriptions of Montoni illustrate the physical characteristics and the emotional undertones of the villain figure:

> Among the visitors assembled at dinner were two Italian gentlemen, of whom one was named Montoni, . . . a man about forty, of an uncommonly handsome person, with features manly and expressive, but whose countenance exhibited, upon the whole, more of the haughtiness of command, and the quickness of discernment, than any other character.[40]

And at his reentrance into the novel as Madame Cheron's suitor:

> This Signor Montoni had an air of conscious superiority, animated by spirit, and strengthened by talents, to which every person seemed involuntarily to yield. The quickness of his perceptions was strikingly expressed on his countenance, yet that countenance could submit implicitly to occasion; . . . the triumph of art over nature might have been discerned in it. His visage was long, and rather narrow, yet he was called handsome; and it was, perhaps, the spirit and vigour of his soul, sparkling through his features, that triumphed for him. Emily felt admiration, but not the admiration that leads to esteem; for it was mixed with a degree of fear she knew not exactly wherefore.[41]

Mrs. Radcliffe wishes to implant in the reader the feeling that behind Montoni's handsome facade there exists the potentiality for evil.

The criminal monk is a development of the earlier type first introduced by Matthew Lewis. This villain is also

[39]Railo, pp. 31-32.

[40]Radcliffe, p. 23.

[41]Radcliffe, p. 122.

extremely handsome; he has an aquiline nose, large, black, sparkling eyes with dark brows almost joined together. His eyes have a piercing glance none can resist.[42] His birth is usually surrounded by mystery--in The Monk an opportunity to exploit the incest motif. Mrs. Radcliffe's Schedoni, suspected of being modeled on Lewis' Ambrogio, exhibits the same characteristics, even to the keen glance. Mario Praz, commenting on Schedoni, asserts that he became a model for later Romantic characters. The Romantics chose the "mysterious (but conjectured to be exalted) origin, traces of burnt-out passions, suspicion of ghastly guilt, melancholy habits, pale face, [and inevitably] unforgettable eyes."[43] Generalizing on the monk as hero-villain, Railo states:

> The passion of the romanticists for the past found in the monk a suitable character, in whose heart deep human conflicts could be laid, making of it a stage for the struggle between good and evil for the ultimate mastery over the human soul. For the romantic movement this denoted the setting aside of mere outward effects and the transference of psychological phenomena into the foreground. Also from this point does the appearance of the monk inaugurate a new phase in romanticism inherent in tragedies of the soul, which, as a source of "terror-awakening beauty," provided more effective means than hitherto used.[44]

Maturin, while laicizing his villain, replaces religious hypocrisy with the harrowing torture of an eternal life

[42]Railo, p. 174.

[43]The Romantic Agony, trans. Angus Davidson (New York, 1956), p. 59.

[44]p. 177.

dedicated to tempting humans to give their souls over to the devil. The Wandering Jew motif does not greatly modify the characteristics of the criminal monk. The same physical characteristics joined with spiritual torment combine to create a villain of superhuman dimensions who dominates the action.

The villain, then, is ultimately the most important character in any Gothic novel because only he undergoes some kind of internal struggle. The forces of good defeat him; but the sympathies of the modern-day reader are more fully engaged in tracing his fall from a position of power than in following the setback and ultimate success of the young lovers, the apparent leading characters of the novel.

The lovers themselves illustrate the influence of the novel of sensibility on the Gothic novel. Their triumph over the forces of evil is the intended focal-point of the novel, and the happy union of the lovers the satisfactory conclusion; but Railo, who is representative of the general critical judgment on the love motif, calls it "conventional, bloodless, and dispassionate."[45]

The hero usually appears as a young man of unknown origin; and, as a rule, is a "noble peasant type."[46] Throughout the early part of The Castle of Otranto, for example,

[45]p. 46.

[46]Varma, p. 60.

Theodore is identified only as "the unknown young peasant." The hero's actions are straightforward and unambiguous; he is handsome, conscience-clear, and candid. His function is to protect and to become the husband of the heroine.[47] As a characterization, he has no depth; he is merely a cardboard figure who goes through the motions of opposition to the villain. Victory, recognized nobility, and a good marriage are his rewards for this opposition. There is no critical interest in this character per se; he represents the cliche fantasy of a romantic hero.

The heroine scarcely differs as a characterization from the hero. Her list of attributes includes youth, beauty, and skill in some secondary form of domestic or artistic endeavor such as embroidery, drawing, or lute playing. Her role in the novel is essentially passive.[48] She apparently exists as a character for two purposes: to be pursued by the villain and to be saved by the hero. She is the pawn of forces much greater than herself; and yet in the Gothic concept her symbolic value as a representative of good accords her the fruits of victory and its concomitant rewards, marriage and social position.

The hero and the heroine lack psychological depth, and their predictive simplicity represents a major weakness

[47]Railo, pp. 38-40.

[48]Railo, pp. 40-43.

of the Gothic novel for the modern reader. If the reader is not convinced that the heroine is truly worth saving, then the nature of the struggle which is the heart of the Gothic novel is essentially meaningless. The presentation of the romantic element accurately demonstrates the ambivalence discussed in relation to the villain. It was clearly impossible for an eighteenth century novelist to disregard poetic justice. Walpole's fear of the novelty of his work testifies to his concern for the reader's approval; and his assertion that his wish was to combine elements from both the old and the new romances allows for the retention of some appealing techniques without the loss of the bourgeois audience. Richardsonian sensibility kept the bourgeois faithful. With the readers' ability to identify with the struggle of the heroine, concentration on the complexity of the villain, as in Richardson, is allowed. The Gothicist can explore the often psychotic behavior of the villain because in the end everything will come out all right. It is exactly this problem which confronts the twentieth century reader, experienced in the depiction of complex behavior, who becomes fascinated with the villain, but who must plod wearily through many pages of nonsensical fainting spells, wooden dialogue, and unbelievable lovers.

The secondary characters, like the young lovers, are conventional types. Of greatest importance are the garrulous

servants who provide comic relief. Each heroine has a maid who talks too much and who is more apt to assume that a mysterious occurrence is supernatural in origin; but she is always on hand to tend to her mistress after a fainting spell. After the servants come the religious, who are of two types: the good monk like Father Jerome in The Castle of Otranto, who has all the facts to solve the mystery at the novel's conclusion, and the evil abbess who is the tool of the criminal monk in the novels of the School of Horror. And, finally, the bandits inhabit the forests to prey upon the heroine. These characters appear especially in the novels of Mrs. Radcliffe. Ernest Baker remarks, "Banditti are always lurking in the woods; she [Mrs. Radcliffe] seems to regard them as a kind of local fauna."[49]

These secondary characters, as well as the hero and the heroine, play out their roles as functionaries of the plot situation. Although an indispensable element, character in the Gothic novel is clearly subsidiary to both the action and the evocation of a certain kind of gloomy, mysterious atmosphere. Character together with plot and atmosphere define, albeit not completely, the techniques at the disposal of the Gothic novelist. What remains to be discussed in this chapter is the transposition of the Gothic

[49]The History of the English Novel, V (London, 1934), 195.

spirit to America and the illustrations of it in the novelists who preceded Hawthorne.

3.

The roots of the American novel closely connect with the Gothic. Novelists from Brockden Brown through Hawthorne and Melville to Faulkner can be called Gothic without stretching the meaning of the term. Richard Chase in The American Novel and Its Tradition asserts that in contrast to the mainstream of the British novel, American fiction seems unconcerned with social analysis, disregards a close approximation of reality, stresses action, and creates two-dimensional characters in ideal relationships.[50] The American novel veers away from an analytic exploration of man in relation to society, the forte of the British novel. Defining the central tradition of the American novel, Chase discusses "romance," a term employed by American writers, at least through Melville, for their long prose works, as possessing

> besides the more obvious qualities of the picturesque and the heroic, an assumed freedom from the ordinary novelistic requirements of verisimilitude, development, and continuity; a tendency towards melodrama and idyll; a more or less formal abstractness and, on the other hand, a tendency to plunge into the underside of consciousness; a willingness to abandon moral questions or to ignore the spectacle of man in society, or to consider these things indirectly or abstractly. . . .

[50](New York, 1957), pp. 12-13.

> The very abstractness and profundity of romance allow it to formulate moral truths of universal validity, although it perforce ignores home truths that may be equally or more important. One may point to the power of romance to express dark and complex truths unavailable to realism.[51]

Much of this definition applies directly also to the Gothic novel itself.

To relate the American novel to the Gothic tradition, it is necessary to assess Charles Brockden Brown's contribution. Leslie Fiedler credits Brown with the adaptation of Gothic techniques to an American setting:

> Charles Brockden Brown, single-handed and almost unsustained, solved the key problems of adaptation, and though by no means a popular success, determined through his influence on Poe and Hawthorne, the future of the gothic novel in America.[52]

Both Alexander Cowie[53] and Richard Chase concur with Fiedler, although Chase expands on Brown's contribution:

> . . . Brown's true _forte_ was melodrama of a sort that allowed him to advance beyond the Gothic novel and to inaugurate that peculiar vision of things that we often find in American fiction--a vision of things that might be described as a heightened and mysteriously portentous representation of abstract symbols and ideas on the one hand and, on the other the involution of the private psyche.[54]

In the preface to _Edgar Huntly_, Brown himself states his theory

[51] pp. ix, xi.

[52] _Love and Death in the American Novel_ (Cleveland, 1960), p. 129.

[53] _The Rise of the American Novel_ (New York, 1951), p. 21.

[54] p. 30.

for the adaptation of Gothic techniques to an American setting:

> One merit the writer may at least claim:--that of calling forth the passions and engaging the sympathy of the reader by means hitherto unemployed by preceding authors. Puerile superstition and exploded manners, Gothic castles and chimeras, are the materials usually employed for this end. The incidents of Indian hostility, and the perils of the Western wilderness, are far more suitable; and for a native of America to overlook these would admit of no apology.[55]

The American wilderness became the symbol of fear, and the Indian the personification of that fear. In addition, Brown includes the pseudo-scientific, such as ventriloquism in Wieland, an indication of William Godwin's influence.[56] The plague which is the foreboding backdrop in both Ormond and Arthur Mervyn is the adaptation of Gothic atmosphere to urban surroundings.

In Edgar Huntly, Brown provides a direct link to James Fenimore Cooper in two scenes: the pit scene and the immediately ensuing Indian attack.[57] Cooper, who emulates Scott in manner, develops Brown's model of substituting the forest and the Indian for the castle and the Gothic villain. In addition to the wilderness and Indian themes, Cooper places his action within a specific historical setting. Cooper's novels, in effect, become the direct American equivalent of

[55](Philadelphia, 1887), p. 4.

[56]Cowie, p. 76.

[57]Cowie, p. 84.

Scott's historical romances. The forest is not only a symbol of fear, but also a battleground for opposing political forces. The captures and the escapes, the flights and the pursuits in The Last of the Mohicans occur within the context of the French and Indian War. Like Scott, Cooper utilizes history for his adventure tales; and like Brown, he Americanizes the Gothic techniques.

From Cooper, the transition to Hawthorne is smooth. The Gothic tradition had been established and Americanized by the time that Hawthorne began to write. His first work, Fanshawe, is almost a direct imitation of Scott in manner and in matter. According to F. O. Matthiessen, the plot (romantic love story with abduction and pursuit) belongs to the Godwinian school; the construction of the book, however, emulates Scott's method in four ways: setting in the past; divisions of characters into groups and carrying the action of each group along separately; developing the plot by means of highlighting scenes; and the introduction of low comedy.[58] Although Hawthorne wished the novel destroyed, the survival of Fanshawe illustrates the strong influence of the Gothic on Hawthorne's artistic intelligence.

Besides indicating the relationship between American fiction and the Gothic novel, this chapter set up the categories of Gothic techniques as they can be related to

[58]American Renaissance (New York, 1941), p. 203.

Hawthorne and provided the historical foundation of the Gothic novel as a strain of British fiction. As one may judge from most of the critical material on the Gothic novel, the approach is almost uniformly historical. Although in their criticism Devendra Varma, Eino Railo, and Montague Summers, the principal writers on the Gothic novel, do not ignore technique, the categorization and discussion of those techniques which the Gothic novelists consistently utilized are subordinate in their intentions. Of all the critics, Railo perhaps develops the aspect of technique to the greatest extent; nevertheless, a meaningful division of techniques which can be applied to Hawthorne's novels is lacking.

Hawthornian criticism also lacks a particularized study. Although numerous critics assert the influence of Gothicism on Hawthorne's writing, only Jane Lundblad in Nathaniel Hawthorne and European Literary Tradition has studied the specifics of that influence. Her study, however, is general in nature and simply gives an uncategorized list of Gothic characteristics to be found in Hawthorne's writings.

I, therefore, found it necessary to devise categories by which it would be possible to impose an organization on the study of Hawthorne's novels. Insofar as I am familiar with the literary criticism both of the Gothic novel and of Hawthorne, categories of Gothic techniques

have not been set up or applied in a methodical fashion to Hawthorne's novels.

In the balance of the dissertation, I plan specifically to study Hawthorne's adaptation of Gothic techniques to his own novels by means of the categories of atmosphere, plot, and character techniques which I have established. Hawthorne sometimes utilized these techniques unchanged, and sometimes he transformed them to suit more aptly his particular purposes for the novel at hand. In each of Hawthorne's novels, the Gothic techniques are integrated in a different manner. From an almost slavish dependence on them in Fanshawe, Hawthorne moved toward a more successful utilization of the techniques' possibilities in relation to the larger purpose of each novel after Fanshawe. The Marble Faun and the succeeding fragments, however, indicate Hawthorne's return to a use of the techniques in a manner similar to that of his first novel. Each novel is basically Gothic in texture; and the Gothicism in each is different in relation to the desired effect to the extent that, in the major novels, Hawthorne was able to control the use of Gothic techniques and to make them effectively contribute to the novel's overall scheme.

Each succeeding chapter of the dissertation will be devoted to Hawthorne's published novels and to the group of unfinished fragments in order to demonstrate the existence

of the Gothic techniques and to relate their adaptation to the specific demands of the subject matter and the theme in each novel. The same group of Gothic techniques is used differently in each novel to produce different effects. Hawthorne does not use the same repertoire of techniques in the same way twice; rather, the larger scheme regulates their usage in consonance with the total effect.

CHAPTER II

FANSHAWE: IN IMITATION OF THE GOTHIC

The historical novel, in vogue during Hawthorne's years at Bowdoin College, admirably reflected the young author's tastes, whetted in his youth and adolescence on the Waverley novels and the romances of the Gothic school.[1] Begun while he was yet at Bowdoin, Fanshawe was one of Hawthorne's first attempts at creative writing;[2] and, as a fledgling effort, the novel depends on those models with which he was familiar. Critical opinion has discerned that Sir Walter Scott, William Godwin, and Charles Maturin have influenced Hawthorne most directly in the writing of Fanshawe.[3] I intend to show, rather, that the Gothic novel as a whole influenced Hawthorne in matters of technique to the extent that it is difficult to point to one or more specific authors as being primarily influential, but rather

[1]G. Harrison Orians, "Scott and Hawthorne's Fanshawe," NEQ, XI (June 1938), 388.

[2]Hubert H. Hoeltje, Inward Sky: The Mind and Art of Nathaniel Hawthorne (Durham, N. C., 1962), pp. 82-83.

[3]Cf. F. O. Matthiessen, American Renaissance (New York, 1941), p. 203; Orians, pp. 388-389; Arlin Turner, "Hawthorne's Literary Borrowings," PMLA, LI (1936), 557-558; and Jesse Sidney Goldstein, "The Literary Source of Hawthorne's Fanshawe," MLN, LX (January 1945), 1-8.

that the genre of the Gothic novel of which each is a part has cast its spell over Hawthorne's imagination.

In the first chapter, I organized Gothic techniques into three categories: atmosphere, plot, and character. In this chapter, according to these categories, I will discuss primarily those devices which are familiar or traditional from the Gothic mode and, secondarily, those departures from the tradition of the Gothic in the direction of Hawthorne's own literary independence.

Those techniques of atmosphere which I listed were the castle and its surroundings, descriptions of nature, the supernatural incursion, and minor techniques such as the hidden manuscript or the ancestral portrait. All of these atmospherical devices are to be found in Fanshawe together with the more encompassing device of the use of the historical past, a device which Scott had popularized. Hawthorne, it seems, used the historical past to good advantage in Fanshawe. The young author received the accolade of becoming "to the present generation even what Scott has been to the past [generation]."[4] The novel's historicity, in fact, exemplifies those similarities to Scott which Hawthorne either found compatible or had already begun to develop on his own: the parallels between Scott's Scotland and Hawthorne's own New

[4]Agostino Lombardo, "Il Primo Romanzo di Hawthorne," Studi Americani, I (1955), 73.

England and the interest in antiquarianism.[5]

A return to the past sets the atmospheric keynote for the whole novel. Hawthorne does not frame Fanshawe within a specific historical setting; rather the events occur eighty years prior to the time of the narration. "Ancient," the third word of the novel, begins to color the novel with the atmosphere of the past. Throughout the extended description of Harley College (III, 333-336), a technical imitation in Scott's manner,[6] words such as "antiquity" and "obscurity" continue to develop the atmosphere. As the description proceeds, one meets sentences like "The local situation of the College, so far secluded from the sight and sound of the busy world, is peculiarly favorable to the moral, if not the literary habits of its students. . . ." Later indicators in the same vein include "inaccessible," "Happy Valley of Abyssinia," "shady retreats," "farm-houses--of rather an ancient date," and "secluded." All these examples carefully build up the atmosphere not only of the past, but also of isolation and remoteness.

The age and remoteness of Harley College render it analogous to the Gothic castle. The college, in effect, becomes Hawthorne's American equivalent to the medieval castle. What the college lacks in mystery, a necessary ingredient for

[5]Orians, pp. 388-389.

[6]Orians, p. 389.

Gothic atmosphere, Hawthorne instead relies on the mysterious possibilities of the wilderness and the dwellings surrounding Harley. None of the dramatized scenes takes place within the confines of the college itself; they occur, rather, in the forest, in Widow Butler's cottage, in Dr. Melmoth's house and garden, and in Hugh Crombie's Inn. Hawthorne infuses each of these locations with the requisite atmospheric coloring.

In a walk that Ellen and Edward take, the latter points to the woods, describing them as containing "'hidden wonders, of rock, and precipice, and cave . . .'" (III, 345). Along with Fanshawe, they come upon the Widow Butler's cottage:

> Time and neglect seemed to have conspired its ruin, and but for a thin curl of smoke from its clay chimney, they could not have believed it to be inhabited. A considerable tract of land, in the vicinity of the cottage, had evidently been, at some former period, under cultivation, but was now overrun by bushes and dwarf pines, among which many huge gray rocks, ineradicable by human art, endeavored to conceal themselves. About half an acre of ground was occupied by the young blades of Indian corn, at which a half-starved cow gazed wistfully, over the mouldering log fence (III, 347).

The quotation combines the sense of the inexorable decaying effect of time familiar from Mrs. Radcliffe with the peculiarly American image of the Indian corn to produce a true approximation of Gothic atmosphere.

Similarly, the description of Dr. Melmoth's garden stresses its solitariness and mystery:

> It was an intermixture of kitchen and flower garden--a labyrinth of winding paths, bordered by hedges and

> impeded by shrubbery. Many of the original trees of the forest were still flourishing among the exotics, which the Doctor had transplanted thither. It was not without a sensation of fear, stronger than she /Ellen/ had ever before experienced, that Ellen Langton found herself in this artificial wilderness, . . . The spot was indeed sufficiently solitary, . . . (III, 360-361).

Even in this created spot, Hawthorne carefully conveys the necessary attributes of fear and isolation.

The influence of Mrs. Radcliffe's manner of scenery description is evident in the climactic scene at the cave (III, 437-442). From his mother's cottage, Butler leads Ellen toward the cave along a path which is "devious," "faintly traced," and "overgrown with bushes and young trees." The two reach a precipice amid "wild and rude scenery" from which they must reach the hidden cave:

> Just at the termination of the accessible portion of the crag, these trees are so numerous, and their foliage so dense, that they completely shroud from view a considerable excavation, formed, probably, hundreds of years since, by the fall of a portion of the rock. The detached fragment still lies at a little distance from the base, gray and moss-grown, but corresponding, in its general outline, to the cavity from which it was rent (III, 438).

To contrast with this barrenness, Hawthorne describes a beautiful little waterfall which "gushes forth from the high, smooth forehead of the cliff." The waterfall adds the requisite Radcliffean sublimity. When they finally reach the cave, Butler assures Ellen, "In this spot you need fear no intruder; but it will be dangerous to venture beyond its bounds." Hawthorne has designed the whole passage to combine

the contrasts in nature with the dramatic situation to produce the typically Gothic situation of the maiden in the power of the villain.

Although Hawthorne Americanizes the locations, he relies on his British predecessors for the models of atmospheric techniques; however, he introduces a departure in his treatment of the supernatural incursion. In his hands, the supernatural becomes an ambiguity with alternative or open-ended explanations. Two examples of this device occur in the characterization of Fanshawe. The first is Fanshawe's mysterious power, familiar as a characteristic of the Gothic villain, but in this case given to the hero. Fanshawe interrupts Ellen and the mysterious stranger (Butler) in Dr. Melmoth's garden:

> Fanshawe turned, calmly, and fixed his eye on the stranger. "Retire, Sir," was all he said.
> Ellen almost shuddered, as if there were a mysterious and unearthly power in Fanshawe's voice; for she saw that the stranger endeavored in vain, borne down by the influence of a superior mind, to maintain the boldness of look and bearing, that seemed natural to him. He at first made a step forward--then muttered a few half-audible words;--but, quailing at length beneath the young man's bright and steady eye, he turned and slowly withdrew (III, 363).

The hypothetical "as if" from Ellen's point of view does not directly impute superior power to Fanshawe; Hawthorne merely suggests the power, but the inference must be the reader's.

A more clear-cut example is the ambiguity connected with Butler's gravesite:

> The body was buried where it had fallen, close by the huge, gray, moss-grown fragment of rock--a monument on which centuries can work little change. The eighty years that have elapsed since the death of the widow's son, have, however, been sufficient to obliterate an inscription, which some one was at the pains to cut in the smooth surface of the stone. Traces of letters are still discernible; but the writer's many efforts could never discover a connected meaning. The grave, also, is overgrown with fern bushes, and sunk to a level with the surrounding soil. But the legend, though my version may be forgotten, will long be traditionary in that lonely spot, and give to the rock, and the precipice, and the fountain, an interest thrilling to the bosom of the romantic wanderer (III, 454).

The identities of the grave-digger and the monument inscriber are left intentionally unidentified, and the legend surrounding the site adds further to the sense of mystery which may or may not be rationally explained.

Of the minor atmospheric techniques at his disposal, Hawthorne uses the storm, the mysterious visitor, and candle light to heighten suspense in the episode at the Inn:

> The evening . . . was dark and tempestuous. The rain descended almost in a continued sheet, and occasional powerful gusts of wind drove it hard against the north-eastern windows of Hugh Crombie's Inn. But at least one apartment of the interior presented a scene of comfort, and of apparent enjoyment; the more delightful from its contrast with the elemental fury that raged without (III, 381).

Hawthorne himself points out the contrast between the external violence and the internal serenity, although "apparent" should suggest the coming tension within Crombie's Inn.

Early in the scene, Hawthorne plants the information that an unknown lady is present in the Inn, identified

tentatively as Dame Crombie for Edward Walcott's benefit. The Inn gradually fills with students, Fanshawe among them. In imitation of similar scenes in Scott, drinking and singing become the order of the evening until, using a typically Gothic device, Hawthorne introduces a stranger:

> . . . he [Crombie] saw, near the door, in the dim back-ground of the apartment, a figure in a cloak. The hat was flapped forward, the cloak muffled round the lower part of the face, and only the eyes were visible (III, 388).

The figure, ironically, turns out to be Dr. Melmoth, who, shortly afterwards when the rain has let up, prepares to leave. By mistake, he opens the wrong door:

> "Heavens! what do I see?" ejaculated Doctor Melmoth, lifting his hands, and starting back from the entrance of the room. The three students pressed forward;--Mrs. Crombie and the servant girl had been drawn to the spot, by the sound of Hugh's voice; and all their wondering eyes were fixed on poor Ellen Langton.
>
> The apartment, in the midst of which she stood, was dimly lighted by a solitary candle, at the farther extremity; but Ellen was exposed to the glare of the three lamps, held by Hugh, his wife, and the servant girl. Their combined rays seemed to form a focus exactly at the point where they reached her; . . . (III, 392).

Hawthorne uses the light imagery to underscore the compromising situation in which Ellen finds herself. Hawthorne rounds out the chapter as he began it with a description of the storm: "A strong breeze sometimes drove the clouds from the brow of heaven, so as to disclose a few of the stars; but, immediately after, the darkness would again become Egyptian, and the rain rush like a torrent from the sky" (III, 398).

This analysis indicates the degree to which Hawthorne depends on the arsenal of traditional Gothic techniques for the creation of a gloomy and mysterious atmosphere. The departures from the Gothic school include the displacement of the castle in favor of the American wilderness and the use of the ambiguity for the real or "explained" supernatural.

In plot techniques, Hawthorne remains close to his Gothic models. The central situation of the abduction and rescue of a young maiden is basic material for all Gothic romances, although the specific model for Fanshawe may be Godwinian.[7] Another critic, however, presents a cogent case for Melmoth the Wanderer.[8] He points out a series of parallels between the plot material of Fanshawe and "The Tale of the Indians" section of Melmoth. Whether from Godwin or from Maturin, the antecedents for Fanshawe's story are solidly Gothic.

In narrative structure, Arlin Turner suggests that Hawthorne learned much from Scott. Hawthorne imitates Scott's narrative techniques in five ways:

1) division of characters into groups with separate action
2) unravelling the plot by a series of well-defined dramatic scenes
3) elaborate scenes

[7]Matthiessen, p. 203.

[8]Goldstein, pp. 1-8.

4) personal commentary
5) reflection in the text of personal hobbies.[9]

Turner includes this general comment on the novel:

> Fanshawe was plainly an imitation of Scott's romances, the influence of the Waverley novels being especially discernible in the long drawn-out initial picture of the grounds and buildings at Harley, in the fun poked at college professors, . . . in the scene of the president's reading his letters, and the colorless heroine, Ellen Langton.[10]

The action of the plot springs from the machinations of Butler in his attempts to abduct Ellen. Three times he is repelled before he is successful and ultimately defeated by Fanshawe. Comic interludes introduced at the appearances of Dr. Melmoth, Hugh Crombie, and Dolly, the servant girl, relax the tension of the main plot. Complications result from the misinformation given by Butler about Ellen's father, who, as expected, appears after Ellen's disappearance. The Widow Butler's deathbed recognition of her son adds to the Gothic texture of sentimentality; and, finally, the triangular love situation recalls The Castle of Otranto. As in Walpole's novel, the death of one of the rivals resolves the triangle. If one focuses on the decline of Fanshawe as a plot element, the Gothicism of the novel deepens further because the novel, in effect, becomes a "deathwatch."[11]

[9]Turner, p. 558.

[10]Turner, p. 558.

[11]Robert Eugene Gross, "Hawthorne's First Novel: The Future of a Style," PMLA, LXXVIII (March 1963), 63.

The plot techniques are fairly traditional, but Hawthorne treats the techniques of characterization with more complexity. Although the secondary hero, the heroine, and the minor characters remain close to their Gothic prototypes, the characterizations of Fanshawe and Butler receive analysis to the extent that one critic can call Fanshawe a novel "of character and adjustment."[12] For example, Fanshawe, the titular hero, possesses two characteristics which are commonly attributed to the Gothic villain. He has the powerful glance which wilts the enemy;[13] and unattainable intellectual longings torture him much as they did the Wandering Jew figure Melmoth:

> He [Fanshawe] called up in review the years that, even at his early age, he had spent in solitary study--in conversation with the dead--while he had scorned to mingle with the living world, or to be actuated by any of its motives. He asked himself, to what purpose was all this destructive labor, and where was the happiness of superior knowledge? He had climbed but a few steps of a ladder that reached to infinity--he had thrown away his life in discovering, that, after a thousand such lives, he should still know comparatively nothing. He even looked forward with dread . . . to the eternity of improvement that lay before him. It seemed now a weary way, without a resting place, and without a termination; and, at that moment, he would have preferred the dreamless sleep of the brutes that perish, to man's proudest attribute, of immortality (III, 350).

Although unmistakably sympathetic in tone, the unquenchable

[12]Carl Bode, "Hawthorne's Fanshawe: The Promising of Greatness," NEQ, XXIII (June 1950), 239.

[13]Discussed above, p. 40.

thirst for intellectual knowledge is commonly associated with the demon-driven villains who haunt Gothic novels with their immortal longings.

The tone of pathos induces one critic to connect the characterization of Fanshawe with the stock character in the novel of sensibility of a sensitive young man doomed to an early death.[14] The presage of doom is announced in the first description of Fanshawe: ". . . a blight, of which his thin, pale cheek and the brightness of his eye were alike proofs, seemed to have come over him ere his maturity" (III, 346). Fanshawe, as a doomed intellectual isolated from humanity, is the first in a series of characterizations which become a type in Hawthorne's novels. Fanshawe's intellectual aspirations and delicacy of health render him essentially different from the typical Gothic hero and disqualify him as the proper suitor for the heroine's hand. Conveniently enough, Fanshawe is dispatched to more sympathetic climes so that the more traditional hero (Walcott) can marry the heroine. Fanshawe's epitaph describes him in an idealized manner:

> Many tears were shed over his grave; but the thoughtful and the wise, though turf never covered a nobler heart, could not lament that it was so soon at rest. He left a world for which he was unfit; and we trust, that, among the innumerable stars of heaven, there is one where he has found happiness (III, 460).

[14]Otis B. Wheeler, "Hawthorne and the Fiction of Sensibility," NCF, XIX (1965), 160.

This moral sentiment which colors the characterization of Fanshawe becomes even more pronounced in the characterization of the villain, Butler. Although some of the villain's Gothic traits have been relegated to the hero, the basis of the villain's character remains true to the Gothic type. He is of unknown origin and is introduced only as "the angler." From Hugh Crombie, the reader learns of the villain's travels, which are vaguely connected with criminal acts: "'One would judge that his dark face had seen as hot a sun as mine. He has felt the burning breeze of the Indies, East and West, I warrant you'" (III, 372). This should recall Melmoth's travels.

The angler's identity remains unknown until the reunion with his mother. Although her death moves him, he remains unregenerate:

> . . . the grief of the son, whose natural feelings had been blunted, but not destroyed, by an evil life, was much more violent than his outward demeanor would have expressed. But his deep repentance, for the misery he had brought upon his parent, did not produce in him a resolution to do wrong no more. The sudden consciousness of accumulated guilt made him desperate. He felt as if no one had thenceforth a claim to justice or compassion at his hands . . . (III, 435).

Moralizing tinges this passage as it does the concluding section of the ninth chapter, devoted to an exposition of Butler's life. He gradually had fallen into crime and had become hardened to it. Langton's just dismissal of him was the turning point: "The goodness and nobleness, of which his heart

was not destitute, turned, from that time, wholly to evil, and he became irrevocably ruined and irreclaimably depraved" (III, 453). The quotations illustrate the moral tone of the characterization which is an analysis of the complexity of a man whose evil stems from weakness of character.

The other major characters do not receive the extensive analysis devoted to Fanshawe and Butler. Ellen Langton, the heroine, comes primarily from the Gothic novel and secondarily from the novel of sensibility. The first description of her could not be more sentimentalized:

> If pen could give an adequate idea of Ellen Langton's loveliness, it would achieve what [an artist's] pencil . . . could; for though the dark eye might be painted, the pure and pleasant thoughts that peeped through them could only be seen and felt. But descriptions of beauty are never satisfactory. It must therefore be left to the imagination of the reader to conceive of something not more than mortal--nor, indeed, quite the perfection of mortality--but charming men the more, who felt that, lovely as she was, she was of like nature to themselves (III, 340-341).

She is naturally adept at domestic duties, her particular <u>forté</u> being cooking. She also, like other Gothic heroines, is inclined to tears in tense situations, as in the scene at the Inn. The one interesting departure from the tradition of the Gothic heroine is that Ellen has no maidservant, a subtle indicator perhaps of American democracy.

There are no interesting departures in the treatment of Edward Walcott, who fits snugly into the pattern of the wooden Gothic hero. Handsome, charming, rich, he lacks

nothing but the vitality of a real characterization. In Fanshawe, he is even robbed of the final rescue of the heroine, although he is rewarded with her hand after the two decently wait for the delicate Fanshawe to die.

The secondary characters are familiar types. Dr. Melmoth, named perhaps to do homage to the Maturin novel, combines the old father character (e.g. M. de St. Aubert in The Mysteries of Udolpho) with the absent-minded scholar, similar to the type in Scott. Also from Scott comes the characterization of Hugh Crombie, inn-keeper and ne'er-do-well, whose heart, after all, is in the right place. Mrs. Melmoth, the shrewish wife, is perhaps a softening of the evil abbess character, a type from the later Gothic novels.

Fundamentally, Fanshawe leans heavily on the tradition of the Gothic novel in techniques of atmosphere, plot, and character. The new additions in atmospheric techniques are founded in part on the necessity to Americanize the Gothicism, already begun in the novels of Brown and Cooper, and in part on Hawthorne's own uncertainty about the efficacy of the supernatural incursion. Fear of the wilderness must replace the British equivalent of the castle if, indeed, there is to be any Gothic effect. The ambiguity of possible supernatural occurrences reflects Hawthorne's own difficulties in dealing head-on with the supernatural and adds a deeper resonance to the work. In Hawthorne's view, the

supernatural is not a matter of blithe scientific explanation or of absolute certainty. Because for Hawthorne the problem is open-ended and uncertain, it is better left without a definitive explanation.

The deepening of characterization is also a welcome change. The analysis of Fanshawe is Hawthorne's first attempt at a character who would recur throughout his work. In the characterization of Butler, one cannot ignore the moral framework in which the weakness of a man's character is explored. Guilt, repentance, and despair are the psychological characteristics that Hawthorne analyzes in Butler. One critic, for example, believes that all the Gothic trappings are the handmaidens of the moral framework in which Hawthorne always sets his work.[15] Gothicism in the service of moralism becomes much more evident in Hawthorne's next novel, The Scarlet Letter.

Hawthorne's alterations of Gothic techniques are all to the good; nevertheless, one simply cannot ignore the centrality of the Gothic vision which infuses itself throughout the work. Gothic techniques are omnipresent and must be considered as much a part of Fanshawe as any moral intention.

[15]Gross, p. 60 passim.

CHAPTER III

THE SCARLET LETTER: GOTHICISM WITH A MORAL

Henry James wrote of The Scarlet Letter: "It is densely dark with a single spot of vivid color in it; and it will probably long remain the most consistently gloomy of English novels of the first order."[1] This comment admirably serves as an introduction to an approach to the novel which analyzes its Gothic effects. That part of the effect which James calls "consistently gloomy" depends upon the atmospheric coloring in which the novel is bathed; and that coloring in turn depends upon those techniques which Hawthorne borrowed from Gothic novelists. An approach which details the debt Hawthorne owed the Gothic school cannot hope to offer a fully balanced appraisal of The Scarlet Letter; but the results of this approach add further evidence to the high critical esteem which the novel merits as a superior work of art.

The Scarlet Letter has sustained a variety of approaches; none of them, however, has studied to any degree the Gothic techniques of the novel. The techniques of atmosphere, plot, and character appear in part just as they

[1] Hawthorne (New York, 1879), p. 106.

do in Gothic novels; but Hawthorne's own contributions deepen those familiar techniques. This chapter will focus on the balance between those techniques which Hawthorne took over from the Gothic novel and those contributions which he himself made. From tentative beginnings in Fanshawe, these contributions are an elaboration of the techniques of ambiguity and of characterization. There is no simple correlation between the Gothic novel and The Scarlet Letter in which the latter is wholly dependent on the former; but the number of techniques borrowed induces one to conclude that the relationship between the two is real and merits analysis. This analysis will follow from the categories previously set up in the first chapter: atmosphere, plot, and character.

As James noted, the atmosphere of The Scarlet Letter is singularly gloomy. Hawthorne, concentrating on the moral consequences of sin, surrounds the characters in the unrelievedly somber dreariness of Puritan Boston. An overwhelming impression of gray is cast over the scene, banishing the presence of brightness and vitality. Even before the story proper begins, "The Custom House" essay serves as an atmospheric introduction. One critic notes that Hawthorne's real surroundings aided the establishment of such a gloomy atmosphere: "What had probably most contributed to his [Hawthorne's] malaise in the Custom House was the perpetual

atmosphere of decay and near death that he breathed."[2] This decay is apparent in Hawthorne's description of the second-storey room

> in which the brick-work and naked rafters have never been covered with panelling and plaster. . . . This airy hall, therefore, over the Collector's apartments, remains unfinished to this day, and, in spite of the aged cobwebs that festoon its dusky beams, appears still to await the labor of the carpenter and mason. At one end of the room, in a recess, were a number of barrels, piled one upon another, containing bundles of official documents. Large quantities of similar rubbish lay lumbering on the floor. It was sorrowful to think how many days, and weeks, and months, and years of toil, had been wasted on these musty papers, which were now only an encumbrance on earth, and were hidden away in this forgotten corner, never more to be glanced at by human eyes (I, 28).

With this setting, the atmosphere for the story itself is already set.

"The Custom House" not only sets the tone, but it also intermediates between the contemporary reader and the tale which takes place in the historical past.[3] Not a historical novel in the sense of Scott's or Cooper's, The Scarlet Letter deals with a past which is already remote from the nineteenth century reader. The setting, however, is part of the usable American past consistent with Hawthorne's interests--in this case the witch-trials presided over by his

[2]Frank MacShane, "The House of the Dead: Hawthorne's Custom House and The Scarlet Letter," NEQ, XXXV (March 1962), 99.

[3]MacShane, p. 93.

own ancestors. This situation is analogous to the Gothic novelist's use of medieval European past. Fear of the demonic supernatural combined with Hawthorne's feeling of ancestral guilt counterpoints the Gothicist's acceptance of the romantic and the marvelous in a time centuries removed from his own. Hawthorne in "The Custom House" gradually transports the reader from the Salem of the 1840's to seventeenth century Boston. The transition through the tone of Hawthorne's remembrances prepares the reader for the bleakness of the tale.

The novel proper begins with a Gothic flourish:

> A throng of bearded men, in sad-colored garments and gray, steeple-crowned hats, intermixed with women, some wearing hoods, and others bareheaded, was assembled in front of a wooden edifice, the door of which was heavily timbered with oak, and studded with iron spikes (I, 47).

The building is a jail, and outside it stands a scaffold upon which Hester bearing the Scarlet Letter must face the Puritan crowd. At once, the atmosphere is communicated through the setting. The negative feelings engendered by the jail and the fearful feelings aroused by the scaffold suffice to chill the reader, much as the castle does in a Gothic novel. Hawthorne's distinctive alteration of the setting, however, introduces the moral elements inherent in the symbolic meanings attached to the jail, the scaffold, and the Scarlet Letter.[4]

[4]Hyatt H. Waggonner, Hawthorne (Cambridge, 1963), p. 128.

The other settings reinforce the kind of atmosphere familiar to the reader of the Gothic novel. Hester's cottage, for example, is isolated:

> On the outskirts of the town, within the verge of the peninsula, but not in close vicinity to any other habitation, there was a small thatched cottage. It had been built by an earlier settler, and abandoned, because the soil about it was too sterile for cultivation, while its comparative remoteness put it out of the sphere of that social activity which already marked the habits of the emigrants. It stood on the shore, looking across a basin of the sea at the forest-covered hills, towards the west. A clump of scrubby trees, such as alone grew on the peninsula, did not so much conceal the cottage from view, as seem to denote that here was some object which would fain have been, or at least ought to be, concealed (I, 81).

The description, similar in tone to the passage on the Widow Butler's cottage in Fanshawe,[5] combines the sense of desolation with the feeling of isolation to serve a moral purpose. Contrary to expectations aroused from familiarity with the Gothic pattern, nothing mysterious occurs at Hester's cottage; rather, Hawthorne manipulates the Gothic techniques to communicate Hester's moral isolation.

Used more traditionally, the description of Governor Bellingham's mansion approximates the Gothic castle in effect. The mansion's wide entrance hall, ancestral portraits, and coat of armor are like the interior of a Gothic castle. But, again, what happens within the Governor's house has a moral intent. The Rev. Dr. Wilson questions Pearl about God; the

[5]Cf. Chapter II, p. 38.

armor's mirrored front grotesquely exaggerates Hester's Scarlet Letter; and the Governor and Dr. Wilson decide to let Pearl remain in Hester's custody. The Gothic provides the backdrop, but in the foreground moral actions are the center of interest.

The exterior settings also combine Gothic techniques with an overriding moral purpose. In the form of forest wilderness, Nature smothers Boston. Hawthorne calls up all the resources of the Gothic to remind the reader of the close proximity of the forest. Early in the novel referred to as "our wild forest land," the wilderness becomes almost animate in the central episode in which Hester tries to persuade Dimmesdale to flee with her away from the constraints of Puritan Boston. Connected with the Black Man through Mistress Hibbins, who ventures into the forest for trysts with the devil, the wilderness symbolizes the evil quality of raw nature.[6] Hawthorne communicates the evil through the preponderant images of darkness in the description of Hester's journey into the forest:

> The road . . . was no more than a footpath. It straggled onward into the mystery of the primeval forest. This hemmed it in so narrowly, and stood so blank and dense on either side, and disclosed such imperfect glimpses of the sky above, that, to Hester's mind, it imaged not amiss the moral wilderness in which she had so long been wandering. The day was chill and sombre. Overhead was a gray expanse of cloud, slightly stirred, however, by a

[6]Wheeler, p. 168.

> breeze; so that a gleam of flickering sunshine might now and then be seen at its solitary play along the path. This flittering cheerfulness was always at the farther extremity of some long vista through the forest. The sportive sunlight--feebly sportive, at best, in the predominant pensiveness of the day and scene--withdrew itself as they came nigh, and left the spots where it had danced the drearier because they had hoped to find them bright (I, 183).

The images of light scarcely balance the predominant imagery of blackness. The darkness is shortly afterward personified in Pearl's demand to hear a story about the Black Man whose abode the forest is. As the habitat of the devil, the forest wilderness symbolizes the fear and dread of people who have chosen to live in civilized surroundings. It is in this manner that Hawthorne uses the forest to denote moral evil--Gothic techniques to support ethical concerns.

Lastly, from the wilderness come the Indians whom Brockden Brown had aptly used to personify the evil dwelling or lurking in the forest. In The Scarlet Letter, Hawthorne includes descriptions not only of the Indians but also of the equally uncivilized seamen:

> A party of Indians--in their savage finery of curiously embroidered deer-skin robes, wampum belts, red and yellow ochre, and feathers, and armed with the bow and arrow and stone-headed spear--stood apart, with countenances of inflexible gravity, beyond what even the Puritan aspect could attain. Nor, wild as were these printed barbarians, were they the wildest feature of the scene. This distinction could more justly be claimed by some mariners. . . . They were rough-looking desperadoes, with sun-blackened faces, and an immensity of beard. . . . From beneath their broad-brimmed hats of palm leaf, gleamed eyes which,

> even in good nature and merriment, had a kind of animal ferocity. They transgressed without fear or scruple, the rules of behaviour that were binding on all others; . . . (I, 232).

The descriptions of the settings remain close to their Gothic models, wherein they were used to instill fear into the reader. This aim remains in Hawthorne; but added to it is the moral purpose, evident, for example, in the symbolic effects of the jail and the scaffold, Hester's isolated cottage, and the wilderness as almost a living agent of evil. The fear that Hawthorne raises in the reader is not for the purpose of some evanescent thrill, but for the confrontation with moral evil. The fear is not explained away at the last moment, but rather it is left deep in the reader's impressions.

This lack of explanation remains in Hawthorne's treatment of the supernatural. Hawthorne in the more than twenty years that passed between the composition of Fanshawe and The Scarlet Letter refined his treatment of the ambiguity to the point that Matthiessen calls "the principle of multiple choice" one of Hawthorne's most fertile resources.[7] The ambiguities in The Scarlet Letter take the forms of legends, unexplained phenomena, or hypothetical episodes. A legend, for example, explains the rose bush growing outside the jailhouse door:

[7]Matthiessen, p. 277.

> This rose-bush, by a strange chance, has been kept alive in history; but whether it had merely survived out of the stern old wilderness, so long after the fall of the gigantic pines and oaks that originally overshadowed it,--or whether, as there is fair authority for believing, it had sprung up under the footsteps of the sainted Ann Hutchinson, as she entered the prison door,--we shall not take upon us to determine (I, 48).

Legends also grow up around Hester's Scarlet Letter, said to be hot to the touch and to glow with infernal fire in the darkness.

The central ambiguity of the appearance of the meteor during Dimmesdale's midnight vigil on the scaffold is an ultimately unexplained phenomenon. Hawthorne has one explanation for what the minister sees:

> We impute it, therefore, solely to the disease in his own eye and heart, that the minister, looking upward to the zenith, beheld there the appearance of an immense letter,--the letter A,--marked out in lines of dull red light. Not but the meteor may have shown itself at that point, burning duskily through a veil of cloud; but with no such shape as his guilty imagination gave it; or, at least, with so little definiteness, that another's guilt might have seen another symbol in it (I, 155).

A reasonable, psychologically sound interpretation of guilt projection; but after the Sunday sermon, the minister's sexton mentions the phenomenon:

> "But did your reverence hear of the portent that was seen last night? A great red letter in the sky,--the letter A,--which we interpret to stand for Angel. For, as our good Governor Winthrop was made an angel, it was doubtless held fit that there should be some notice made thereof!"
>
> "No," answered the minister, "I had not heard of it" (I, 158).

This little episode completely destroys the equilibrium established by the rational explanation previously offered. Hawthorne leaves the final interpretation of the incident to the reader.

On at least three other occasions, Hawthorne relates Dimmesdale's experiences with ambiguity. In the first scaffold scene, it is ironically Dimmesdale's duty to try to discover the identity of Hester's lover (I, 67-68). Dimmesdale speaks with charged feelings about the adulterer who must add hypocrisy to his unconfessed sexual sin; but, when Hester refuses to answer, he exclaims, "Wondrous strength and generosity of a woman's heart! She will not speak!" What seems to the onlookers praise for Hester's strength is rather Dimmesdale's own expression of relief. Hawthorne manages to present this scene with the ambiguity of irony between Dimmesdale's knowledge and the crowd's ignorance. After his forest encounter with Hester, Dimmesdale supposedly meets Mistress Hibbins; but Hawthorne describes it with verbal phrases like "is said" and hypothetical clauses like "if it were a real incident," casting doubt on the reality of the episode. Hawthorne also offers the reader a multiplicity of explanations regarding the imprint of the letter on Dimmesdale's breast (I, 258-259). Taking on a mythic quality, the stigmata is believed or doubted or rejected. The narrator finally concludes:

> The reader may choose among these theories. We have thrown all the light we could acquire upon the portent, and would gladly, now that it has done its office, erase its deep print out of our own brain; where long meditation has fixed it in very undesirable distinctness (I, 259).

The narrator himself confesses weakness and cannot solve the riddle to satisfy the reader. If doubts and questions leave the reader uneasy, the narrator, or Hawthorne himself, has the same doubts and is equally uncomfortable.

The doubt causes Hawthorne to employ the technique of the ambiguity. The existence of the supernatural is taken for granted, but Hawthorne does not assert the necessary goodness of every supernatural occurrence as the early Gothicists like Walpole and Reeve did; in fact, Hawthorne follows Lewis and Maturin more closely in the recognition of the spiritual as an overwhelmingly complex phenomenon which cannot be explained away with some quasi-scientific trick. Hawthorne was aware of the struggle between good and evil in terms of the Calvinistic conception of human nature; but Hawthorne was not so rash as to give a simplistic explanation of that nature. Belief in the supernatural is accepted; but the meaning of the supernatural cannot be given by a narrator who is omniscient only within the confines of literary art. The literary solution that Hawthorne worked out was the technique of ambiguity. Hawthorne's answer was that there was no answer; and the reader's judgment must evaluate the data given, not as a detached scientist, but as a

responsive, sympathetic observer of the human condition.

The only other atmospheric device to be considered is the minor techniques, an important example of which is the manuscript or document of Surveyor Pue, which outlines the story of Hester Prynne. This episode from "The Custom House" gives the motive for Hawthorne's telling of the tale. Hawthorne employs the device in the same way that Maturin, for example, had in Melmoth the Wanderer.

Within the body of the novel, the major device is the Scarlet Letter itself. Hawthorne seems to invest the emblem with life itself. Viewed as an objet d'art, the letter becomes demonic and terrible, a tendency which one critic claims occurs in all of Hawthorne's work.[8] The Scarlet Letter is the single, most important atmospheric technique in the novel because with all its symbolic associations it colors the atmosphere with what it represents to the Puritan community and to each of the principal characters.

In matters of plot, The Scarlet Letter displays both Hawthorne's reliance on older Gothic methods and on his divergence from the Gothic pattern. In the technical matter of telling the story, as in Fanshawe, Hawthorne relied on Scott's method of dividing the characters into groups each with separate action.[9] In the beginning of "The Custom

[8]Thomas B. Brumbaugh, "Concerning Nathaniel Hawthorne and Art as Magic," American Imago, XI (1954), 400.

[9]Turner, p. 558.

House" section, Hawthorne utilizes the ancestral curse, a favorite plot device of the Gothicists. The influence of his witch-hunting ancestors is at least a partial explanation for the strong effect that the discovery of Surveyor Pue's document had on Hawthorne's morbid imagination. The ancestral curse is altered to ancestral guilt, but the result is the same because the guilt provides the mainspring for the creation of the novel.

Hawthorne, however, did not rely on the Gothic model in plot construction. In contrast to the loose, episodic structure of most Gothic stories, The Scarlet Letter is very tightly organized. Each part is molded with economic precision to every other part. Even "The Custom House" essay is intimately connected with the story proper in setting its mood and in introducing the central thematic concern.[10]

Although many critics have studied the novel's structure and their emphases differ, their interpretations attest to the essential unity of the work. Hugh Maclean looks upon the structure as a series of three quests: Dimmesdale's being the expiation of guilt and the search for the requisite courage to confess his sin; Chillingworth's being the discovery of his wife's lover; and Pearl's being the search

[10]More detailed discussions of "The Custom House" essay can be found in Sam S. Baskett, "The (Complete) Scarlet Letter," CE, XXII (1961), 321-328, and Marshall Van Deusen, "Narrative Tone in 'The Custom House' and The Scarlet Letter," NCF, XXI (1966), 61-71.

for a father, both physical and spiritual.[11] John Gerber sees the novel as a series of four actions, each with its own agent: (1) society (I-VIII); (2) Chillingworth (IX-XII); (3) Hester (XIII-XX); and (4) Dimmesdale (XXI-XXIV).[12] Leland Schubert's analysis, closest in spirit to the Gothic, focuses upon the scaffold as the central unifying symbol.[13]

The unified structure of The Scarlet Letter does not preclude the ordinary techniques of suspense, unknown identities, and climactic revelations. These techniques, however, are secondary to the larger structure which works in a logical, developed fashion toward Dimmesdale's exposure.

As in plot techniques, the characterizations are impressive in their fusion of Gothic bases with Hawthorne's psychological acuity. The movement away from flat characterizations already evident in Fanshawe is carried further in The Scarlet Letter. In the former novel, both Fanshawe and Butler are analyzed psychologically, whereas in The Scarlet Letter all the major characters receive the benefit of Hawthorne's psychological penetration.

Hawthorne based Chillingworth on the Faustian type,

[11]"Hawthorne's Scarlet Letter: 'The Dark Problem of This Life,'" AL, XXVII (March 1955), 12-24.

[12]"Form and Content in The Scarlet Letter," NEQ, XVII (March 1944), 25-55.

[13]"The Scarlet Letter" in Hawthorne the Artist: Fine-Art Devices in Fiction (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1944), 131-161.

familiar in such Gothic villains as Ambrogio and Melmoth. W. B. Stein defines the four-part aspects of the Faustian character as (1) a scholar (2) who practices magic (3) places his soul in jeopardy, (4) though not without a glimpse of ideal beauty.[14] Chillingworth's scholarly achievements are beyond question. He had studied in Germany and had picked up further lore during his Indian captivity.[15] In Hawthorne's terms, he places his soul in jeopardy through his unwonted invasion of Dimmesdale's privacy, or as Dimmesdale declares, "He had violated, in cold blood, the sanctity of a human heart" (I, 195). Hawthorne transforms the Faustian characteristic of presumptuous knowledge into his own thematic concern of the wilful destruction of another's integrity.

Characteristically Gothic, Chillingworth possesses the powerful eye and the skill in alchemy and magical arts[16] ordinarily associated with the later villains of the Gothic novel. Moreover, as if to reflect his commitment to evil, Chillingworth undergoes gradual physical deterioration: "[Hester] was startled to perceive what a change had come over his features,--how much uglier they were,--how his dark complexion seemed to have grown duskier, and his figure

[14]Hawthorne's Faust: A Study of the Devil Archetype (Gainesville, Fla., 1953), pp. 105-113 passim.

[15]Described in Chapter IX of the novel.

[16]Mentioned on at least three occasions: I, 70-71; 119; 127-128.

more misshapen . . . (I, 112)."

The glimpse of ideal beauty is the cause of the tension between devotion to scientific achievements and devotion to his beautiful, much younger wife. Hawthorne balances the evil course upon which Chillingworth has embarked with the scholar's own awareness of the difficulties of marriage to the much younger woman. His figurative desertion of Hester for so long a time aggravates the difficulties further. His evil, then, is a conscious decision to seek out his wife's lover, even though he has a full understanding of Hester's sin. The decision is consciously isolating, and the discovery of her lover's identity is for its own sake. Once, in fact, that he had discovered the identity of his wife's lover, he continued to subject Dimmesdale to psychological torture. And, at the last, Chillingworth acknowledged that the scaffold was Dimmesdale's only escape.

The model for Dimmesdale himself is Fanshawe, but with quite a difference. Whereas Fanshawe is an idealized intellectual type, Dimmesdale is a tortured soul who must struggle with his own guilt and hypocrisy to act honorably and profess himself Hester's partner in sin. Like Fanshawe, Dimmesdale is a pale, young man of great learning--as if for Hawthorne the intellectual life prevented physical development. Also, like Fanshawe and like Chillingworth, Dimmesdale physically declines as an external manifestation of internal

(soul) disease. These characteristics make him similar to the Gothic villain; and there are, moreover, antecedents in the Gothic novel for his burning heart (Vathek) and for his involvement with a temptress (The Monk).[17] In basic conception, then, Dimmesdale is not far removed from Gothic models.

As the hero, however, Dimmesdale is not at all like his Gothic counterpart. Through Dimmesdale, Hawthorne dramatizes the struggle of a man in real conflict. The Scarlet Letter is the study of the gropings of a man's soul toward salvation. Astonishingly enough--if one recalls the characteristics of the Gothic hero--critics have even disputed the ultimate disposition of Dimmesdale's soul.[18] The critics take the ambiguity of Dimmesdale's regeneration (Chapters XIX ff.) to indicate the uncertainty of the efficacy of his repentance. This is far from the ordinary Gothic hero, if one is not even sure of the hero's salvation. This deepening of characterization is one of Hawthorne's most valuable contributions, announcing his independence from a strict Gothic pattern.

Hester bears out this independence on the distaff side. Her description resembles the Gothic villainess types, like Matilda in The Monk: "She [Hester] had in her nature a

[17]Stein, p. 35.

[18]Cf. Darrel Abel, "Hawthorne's Dimmesdale: Fugitive from Wrath," NCF, XI (1956), 81-105 and Edward H. Davidson, Dimmesdale's Fall," NEQ, XXXVI (September 1963), 358-370.

rich, voluptuous, Oriental characteristic. . . ." When Hester removes the letter and lets down her hair, she becomes a darkly beautiful, sexual creature. Far from the prim, sexless beauty of the Gothic heroine, Hester has known and has enjoyed sex. The only characteristic she shares with the Gothic heroine is the amazing ability at embroidery, shown to best advantage in the Scarlet Letter itself, a nicely ironic touch of Hawthorne's.

Hester also differs from the Gothic heroine in her apparent strength of character. She does not repent. One critic compares her to Faust in the sense that she has tasted the fruits of forbidden knowledge.[19] In isolation, she begins to study tracts on women's rights, Godwinian in their enthusiasm and their condonation of the breach of marriage vows.[20] Hawthorne ultimately says of her, "The Scarlet Letter had not done its work."

As a characterization, Hester is completely divorced from the Gothic mode of the heroine. The latter may brush closely with evil, but she always remains unscathed. Hester, on the other hand, has met "the Black Man." She may not be the better for it, but she is the more real.

Of the other characters, two have a certain relevance

[19]Stein, p. 113.

[20]Darrel Abel, "Hawthorne's Hester," CE, XIII (March 1952), p. 304.

to this study. Pearl has no Gothic counterpart, but there are certain Gothic elements in her character. Her almost supernatural penetration and demonic contrariness, evident in the forest episode, resemble fairylike or spiritual forces operative through her character. Mistress Hibbins is a type of witch figure, the unambivalent representative of Satan. She is as Gothic in conception as the Devil in The Monk.

The characterizations in The Scarlet Letter are a great improvement over Hawthorne's efforts in Fanshawe. The most praiseworthy is the psychological penetration in the characterizations of Dimmesdale and Hester, both of whom are totally unlike their Gothic counterparts. The conflict dramatized through their actions strengthens the novel as a balanced depiction of the struggle between good and evil. Except for the villain, conflict in the Gothic novel was external. In The Scarlet Letter the struggle throughout is internal.

Every facet of The Scarlet Letter supports it as Hawthorne's masterwork. The analysis of the Gothic techniques in the novel demonstrates that Hawthorne was in sure command of his material because he knew exactly what function these techniques could perform. In The Scarlet Letter that function was to reinforce the moral framework. Rather than to reach out for a quick thrill of fear through the use of these

techniques, Hawthorne adapted the Gothic's ability to arouse fear for the far more serious purpose of the psychological study of hidden sin and guilt. He used what atmospheric techniques could supply to emphasize moral isolation and the fear of death and damnation. He treated the supernatural as the complex and unknown phenomenon that it is. He widened the scope of the techniques to include psychological analysis of all the principal characters. Through adaptation, Hawthorne integrated the techniques into the novel and put them to use most efficiently because he knew exactly what he wanted the Gothic to do.

CHAPTER IV

THE HOUSE OF THE SEVEN GABLES: AMERICAN GOTHIC

The effects of a curse wreaked on the descendents of a family who for generations have lived in a large, gloomy house built on property gotten dishonestly is the substance of The House of the Seven Gables. Substitute "castle" for "house," and Hawthorne's novel becomes indistinguishable in theme from The Castle of Otranto. One needs cite no other novel in Hawthorne's canon to prove irrefutably the extent to which the Gothic tradition has influenced him. One sentence in the preface creates the tone which all Gothicists have sought: "If he [the author] think fit, . . . he may so manage his atmospherical medium as to bring out or mellow the lights and deepen and enrich the shadows of the picture." Within the novel, the balance between light and dark, or in a more general sense, the surrounding atmosphere combined with the plot of the ancestral curse produce a Gothic work.

The novel's Gothicism can be traced to three sources: the use of the house as central symbol, the manipulation of several objects to induce suspenseful or mysterious effects, and the working out of the Gothic plot. But the sense of joy and serenity which the novel finally conveys is attributable to elements which Hawthorne added. Certainly

different in effect from The Scarlet Letter, the optimism at the novel's conclusion points toward Hawthorne's conscious effort to counteract the central core of gloomy Gothicism. To achieve this positive effect, he adds as much of the sense of the historical present through the emphasis of the external world and through the characterizations of Phoebe and Holgrave. All of the characters, although they bear certain resemblances to Gothic types, are defined by their identification with types from Hawthorne's own gallery. Clifford and Hepzibah, for example, do not depend so much on Gothic models as they do on moral interests within Hawthorne's frame of reference.

The tension between the novel's Gothicism and Hawthorne's contributions results in an uneasy equilibrium. The more potent force is the negative or darker gloom of the work, a gloom which the optimistic conclusion does not dispel. Several critics[1] have offered theses about the underlying unified plan of the work, using Clifford's image of the "ascending, spiral curve," or Holgrave's belief in the "united struggle of mankind," or upon the regenerative force symbolized by Phoebe. I have no new solution to offer for the

[1]Among them are Darrel Abel, "Hawthorne's House of Tradition," South Atlantic Quarterly, LII (October 1953), 561-578; William B. Dillingham, "Structure and Theme in The House of the Seven Gables," NCF, XIV (1959), 59-70; and A. J. Levy, "The House of the Seven Gables: The Religion of Love," NCF, XVI (December 1961), 189-203.

apparent incohesiveness of the work; but I do suggest that the union between Gothic and Hawthornian elements is neither complete nor satisfactory. This may account for the fragmentation which strikes most critics of the novel. The Gothic elements are quite striking. The central symbol, the house itself, is a direct equivalent of the Gothic castle.[2] It is large, decayed, and filled with mystery. It is explicitly likened to "a gray feudal castle" (II, 10). It is also connected with the Gothic style of architecture: "Its whole visible exterior was ornamented with quaint figures, conceived in the grotesque of a Gothic fancy . . ." (II, 11). Hawthorne later describes its labyrinthine exterior much in the manner of its corresponding Gothic model:

> There was a strange aspect in it. As she [Hepzibah] trode along the foot-worn passages, and opened one crazy door after another, and ascended the creaking staircase, she gazed wistfully and fearfully around. It would have been no marvel, to her excited mind, if, behind or beside her, there had been the rustle of dead people's garments, or pale visages awaiting her on the landing place above (II, 240).

All of these characteristics resonate with the Gothicism with which Hawthorne has imbued the book. It is important to note that Hawthorne is here working with American materials fashioned according to the Gothic model. In appearance, the decayed, old mansion evokes the foreboding and the vague fear that is common to one who feels the same sensations when he

[2]Lundblad, p. 120.

approaches a Gothic castle in the wilderness. What is improbable is that the house stands in a street in--presumably--early nineteenth century Salem.

To endow the house with atmospheric properties, Hawthorne resorts to devices common to the Gothicists. First of all, he invests the house with tradition, legend, and superstition.[3] The whole first chapter is given over to the substantiation of the long-lived reality of the house. Not only in the present, but for two hundred years past, the house has been the scene of tragedy. Indeed, tragedy has baptized the house. Tradition and the human elaboration of it then took over to suggest that the hand of doom hung over the house. From the elaboration of tradition arose superstition, and hence fear. The house became the habitat not only of the living, but also of ghosts of the dead.

Hawthorne creates this atmosphere with the aid of the supernatural and the investiture of the house's objects with magical properties. Several of the objects become almost lifelike by accretion within the text. Among the house's objects containing mysterious properties are Colonel Pyncheon's portrait, the Malbone miniature of Clifford, Alice's harpsichord, the mirror, and Maule's well. The objects d'art, as one critic notes, especially take on a life of their own.[4]

[3]Waggoner, p. 174.

[4]Brumbaugh, p. 401.

Colonel Pyncheon's portrait, for example, has undergone a transformation through time:

> . . . she [Hepzibah] paused before the portrait of the stern old Puritan, her ancestor, and the founder of the house. In one sense, this picture had almost faded into the canvass, and hidden itself behind the duskiness of age; in another, she could not but fancy that it had been growing more prominent, and strikingly expressive, ever since her earliest familiarity with it, as a child. For, while the physical outline and substance were darkening away from the beholder's eye, the bold, hard, and at the same time, indirect character of the man seemed to be brought out in a kind of spiritual relief (II, 58).

Bringing out the truth of a man apparently was a characteristic that portraits possessed according to Hawthorne. The Malbone miniature of Clifford reflects his delicacy and almost feminine beauty; and Holgrave's daguerrotype of Judge Pyncheon reveals the latter's startling resemblance to his Puritan ancestor.

Other objects exhibit magical properties or almost independent lives of their own. Alice Pyncheon's harpsichord periodically seems to play sad melodies of its own volition. Maule's well shows pictures in its depths to Clifford. And a mirror reflects the history of the house:

> . . . a large, dim looking-glass used to hang in one of the rooms, and was fabled to contain within its depths all the shapes that had ever been reflected there; . . . Had we the secret of that mirror, we would gladly sit down before it, and transfer its revelations to our page (II, 20).

Hawthorne then recounts a legend that the Maules can cause images to appear in the mirror. In the case of the mirror,

legend, magic, and art work together to produce the mysterious atmosphere of the house.

The above example of the magic mirror and the legend surrounding it is one of many in the novel whereby Hawthorne cloaks the supernatural with the ambiguous. Hawthorne seems almost incapable of allowing the supernatural to stand as such. Alice Pyncheon is "supposed" to haunt the house on the death of one of her descendants. In Holgrave's story of Alice: "the ghostly portrait [of Colonel Pyncheon] is averred to have lost all patience, and to have shown itself on the point of descending bodily from its frame. But such incredible incidents are merely to be mentioned aside" (II, 198). The latter sentence, as Hawthorne knows, has as much effect as a judge admonishing the jury to disregard inadmissible evidence. The radical Holgrave is equally affected by this hedging on the supernatural: "'If I were a believer in ghosts--and I don't quite know whether I am, or not,--I should have concluded that all the old Pyncheons were running riot in the lower rooms; . . .'" (II, 287).

Two extended examples of the ambiguous are the reasons proffered for the infection of Maule's well (II, 10) and for the causes of Colonel Pyncheon's death (II, 10). In both cases, Hawthorne balances a scientific or rational explanation with a supernatural or magical explanation attributed to tradition. Hawthorne as narrator diffidently denies

credence to the legendary reason, but the effect is always the same--confusion. The reader's confused response, however, is what Hawthorne is seeking. There is no simplistic answer; Hawthorne's belief in the spiritual world forbids him the reductionist answer of a Mrs. Radcliffe. What the reader must work with is a series of alternative explanations, none of which can be proffered as the answer. The effect is an ambiguity in which the possibility of the supernatural is allowed.

In one last example of the supernaturalism of objects, Hawthorne combines a Gothic preference for the landscape painters with the supernatural in the allusion to a painting by Claude Lorain. It will be remembered that Claude Lorain along with Salvator Rosa and Nicolas Poussin was a favorite landscapist of Gothic writers. The particular painting described by Hawthorne also resonates a supernatural aura:

> Her father [Gervayse Pyncheon] . . . had turned away, and seemed absorbed in the contemplation of a landscape by Claude, where a shadowy and sun-streaked vista penetrated so remotely into an ancient wood, that it would have been no wonder if his fancy had lost itself in the picture's bewildering depths (II, 203).

It is interesting to note that in the careful building of a proper atmosphere a small item such as a Claude brings one back to Hawthorne's connection with the Gothic.[5]

[5]A more detailed treatment of this theme can be found in Leo B. Levy's article, "Picturesque Style in The House of the Seven Gables," NEQ, XXXIX (1966), 147-160.

One must finally consider those natural effects which Hawthorne employs for atmospheric purposes. There are several examples of natural phenomena accompanying a mysterious event. "A sudden gust of wind" announces Colonel Pyncheon's death; and Hepzibah's sigh is compared to "a gust of chill, damp wind out of a long-closed vault, the door of which has accidentally been set ajar . . ." (II, 32). Moonlight, a favorite image of Hawthorne's, colors the atmosphere:

> The moon, too, which had long been climbing overhead, and unobtrusively melting its disk into the azure . . . now began to shine out, broad and oval in its middle pathway. These silvery beams were already powerful enough to change the character of the lingering daylight. They softened and embellished the aspect of the old house; although the shadows fell deeper into the angles of its many gables, and lay brooding under the projecting story, and within the half-open door. With the lapse of every moment, the garden grew more picturesque; the fruit-trees, shrubbery, and flower bushes had a dark obscurity among them. The commonplace characteristics--which, at noontide, it seemed to have taken a century of sordid life to accumulate--were now transfigured by a charm of romance. A hundred mysterious years were whispering among the leaves, whenever the slight seabreeze found its way thither, and stirred them. Through the foliage that roofed the little summer-house, the moonlight flickered to-and-fro, and fell, silvery white, on the dark floor, the table, and the circular bench, with a continual shift and play, according as the chinks and wayward crevices among the twigs admitted or shut out the glimmer (II, 213).

Words such as "brooding," "obscurity," and "mysterious" point to the effect of the moonlight to form a romantic atmosphere. Moreover, a passage such as this illustrates Hawthorne's belief concerning the necessity of creating an atmosphere midway between the actual and the imaginary as the proper sphere

for romance. Moonlight is the transforming agent, used in the same manner as in "The Custom House" section of The Scarlet Letter. The moonlight as a medium effects the union of the past and the present, a theme equally pertinent to The Scarlet Letter and to The House of the Seven Gables.

The moonlight, the various paintings, and the house itself are the devices by which Hawthorne creates the romantic atmosphere with which he has chosen to surround his tale. These devices, as a comparison with their uses discussed in the first chapter bears out, are all Gothic in nature. There is, in fact, little difference between them except their Americanization. Instead of a Medieval past, the house is imbued with the American Puritan experience; but taken as specific techniques, the atmospheric properties of the house are close to their literary source.

Equally close to its literary prototype, the plot is basically Gothic. Hawthorne's stated moral purpose is that "the wrong-doing of one generation lives into the successive ones, and, divesting itself of every temporary advantage, becomes a pure and uncontrollable mischief; . . ." Within the context of the inherited or ancestral curse, then, the action takes place. Hawthorne devotes the first chapter of the romance to a narration of the occasion for the curse. Struggle over possession causes the trouble; and, true to the Gothic model, one family (the Pyncheons) rapes the land from its

rightful owners (the Maules). In this case, not only the house, but also the hope of vast territories in Maine become the imputed possessions of the Pyncheons. As often happens when the scales of justice seem to be tipped unfavorably, the supernatural in Hawthorne as in the Gothic novel takes over. Having gotten rid of his enemy on the trumped-up charge of witchcraft, Colonel Pyncheon, in full possession of property, dreams of untold wealth, and a magnificent new house, built ironically enough by the son of his victim, is not allowed his possessions, his dreams, or his new house. He dies under mysterious circumstances. Hawthorne's sense of the ambiguous here enters. Some say Colonel Pyncheon's death was the result of congenital apoplexy; others say Old Maule was having his revenge. Ghoulish coincidence shows the Hand of the All-Powerful. Or is it the hand of the Evil One? It is too much to believe that the fulfillment of Maule's prophecy that the Pyncheons would choke on their own blood is mere coincidence. So the house is baptized in blood.

This initial situation, clearly spelled out by Hawthorne, sets before the reader all the fundamental relationships which parallel the traditional Gothic plot. The wronged family waiting to take revenge; the ascendent family whose claims are based on an injustice; and strange events which seem to be explainable only in supernatural terms--these elements are common both to <u>The Castle of Otranto</u> and

The House of the Seven Gables. If further parallels were needed, Maurice Beebe offers interesting similarities between the plot of Hawthorne's novel and Poe's story "The Fall of the House of Usher."[6] If Hawthorne's dependence on primary Gothic sources were insufficient evidence, his apparent dependence on Poe, whose Gothic roots are deep, should indicate the effect of the Gothic on Hawthorne's creative consciousness.

The action of the novel itself narrates the last gasps of the Pyncheons. The residents of the decayed house are improverished aristocrats; the contemporary representative of Colonel Pyncheon is still nourishing dreams of great wealth from the Maine territory; all the Maules seemed to have disappeared; but the ghosts hang on. In the action, the Gothic elements are Holgrave's secret identity, Judge Pyncheon's plot which resulted in Clifford's long imprisonment, and the marvelous irony of the discovery of the now worthless map of the Maine possessions behind the portrait of Colonel Pyncheon. Also, embedded in the action is Holgrave's story of the history of Alice Pyncheon, duplicated in the relationship of Holgrave and Phoebe.

Hawthorne fills the novel with the historical present to counterbalance the weight of the past. The house may have

[6]"The Fall of the House of Pyncheon," NCF, XI (1956), 1-17.

remained buried in the guilt and the superstition of the early colonial days, but the scene outside the Pyncheon's mansion is nineteenth century America. Political parades, organ grinders, plebian workmen, and the railroad impinge upon Clifford and Hepzibah Pyncheon. If the plot looks back to Gothic precedents, the denouement of the action depends upon the experience of Hawthorne's America. The clash between situation and action causes the curious double-vision of the novel. The wind of modernity breezes into the stale air of Gothic trappings. Critics have maintained that the Gothic in Hawthorne serves a moral or psychological purpose.[7] As far as this reason explains the presence of the Gothic, there is truth in the statement. Examples from The Scarlet Letter indicate that the Gothic gloom sets off the moral wilderness of the characters; but in The House of the Seven Gables the machinery creaks in the face of the imaginative creation of nineteenth century actuality.

Intent on resolving the curse, Hawthorne concludes the novel with the new union of the Pyncheons and the Maules. The villain has been done away with; the useless Clifford and Hepzibah are sent to pasture; and Holgrave and Phoebe are to have a presumably modern, if somewhat conservative, marriage. But the Gothic influence cannot be done away with that easily. Lingering impressions of the atmosphere remain

[7]See, for example, Waggoner, pp. 174ff.

in the reader's mind long after memories of the young couple have vanished. In The Scarlet Letter, the Gothic successfully counterpointed the pessimistic gloom of the action; but in The House of the Seven Gables, the action unsuccessfully counteracts the background. Hawthorne's major theme of past and present cannot so easily be transformed into Gothicism and modernity. Perhaps it is simply that the Gothicism is outmoded in the more scientifically and practically oriented nineteenth century. By the twentieth century, the Gothicism, though its ability to evoke an atmosphere still grips the reader, has become merely amusing.

What saves the novel is the gallery of characters whom Hawthorne has chosen to inhabit the house. Although there are certain similarities to Gothic types--the glittering eye is seemingly omnipresent in Hawthorne--, the characters are for the most part independent creations which reflect Hawthorne's own interests; and the characters represent moral concerns which have little to do with the Gothic. Two characters in particular, Clifford and Hepzibah, seem to have no antecedents, at least within the confines of the Gothic novel. The Judge seems more a Hawthornian than a Gothic type; and Holgrave and Phoebe are mixtures.

To take the order that I have chosen thus far in the dissertation, I shall begin with the Judge. If one is looking for the Gothic type of villain, however, one must look

elsewhere. Gone are the Wandering Jew and Faust myths; gone are the internal psychological struggles; gone even is the attempted seduction of the heroine. Instead, the reader has the characterization of a proper, modern man engaged in a struggle against his weak, aged relatives. The internal psychological struggle amounts to a juggling of the Judge's public and private faces, and the Gothic myths are reflected in the novel only as a striking resemblance to the Judge's Puritan ancestor.

The contrast in the Judge's character lies in the difference between his smiling, beneficent countenance and the dark frigidity of his heart. The imagery which Hawthorne frequently uses to describe the Judge is the sun versus the cloud or the storm. To emphasize Judge Pyncheon's inner reality, Hawthorne employs Holgrave's daguerrotype and the portrait of Colonel Pyncheon to demonstrate the true darkness of the Judge's character. The camera and the artist do not lie; the falsity is in the Judge's beaming exterior which conceals a grasping, self-centered nature.

This is Chillingworth's sin without the magical appurtenances. The Judge's conscious isolation divorces him from the commonstream of human nature. Within the novel, he does very little that can be termed "evil." His act of omission sent Clifford to prison, and his attempt to wrest the secret of the whereabouts of the Maine territory map is his

principal assault against Clifford and Hepzibah. He has, in fact, only a small role in the novel; his major scene is Hawthorne's death-dance over his corpse. The characters, however, respond to him with hatred and fear. Even Phoebe shies away from his affectionate embrace. She has little reason to repulse him but the intuition of his real nature.

In contrast to Gothic villains who usually are smouldering volcanoes, Judge Pyncheon radiates coldness. His concern stops at the boundary of himself. For this egoism, Hawthorne chastises him with all the power of literary art. Hawthorne concentrates the most intense emotion in the novel on the death-watch over the Judge's body. The cause of Hawthorne's emotional outburst is indignation over the kind of human being that the Judge is. In a larger sense, one is no longer in the drafty halls of Gothicism; rather, one is at the core of Hawthorne's moral concerns. The whole characterization of Judge Pyncheon depends much more on the Hawthornian theme of isolation than on the Gothic theme of aggressive evil.

Judge Pyncheon is basically Hawthornian; but the hero, Holgrave, is a mixed characterization. As a portrayal, he is Janus-like; part of him looks back to Gothic models, while the other part looks forward to nineteenth century modernity and beyond. From the Gothic, Hawthorne has taken the characteristics of the powerful eye and the magical

skills. Holgrave begins with many of the characteristics of the villain, but gradually changes through the novel. Holgrave possesses the Maule ancestral trait of power over other people. The one opportunity to display this power occurs after the narration of his story of Alice Pyncheon to Phoebe. If he were to submit to the Maule spell and take over Phoebe's spirit, he would have become like Westervelt; however, he refuses to yield to the temptation and allows Phoebe to retain her integrity. This action indicates the conflict within Holgrave, the dramatization of which renders him a more vital character than the typically wooden Gothic hero.

Besides the dramatization of conflict, Hawthorne has conceived of Holgrave as a modern rebel. Iconoclastic and liberal, Holgrave knocks about from profession to profession, all the while singing the praises of reform. He represents the railroad, the political rally, and the spirit of science. He is in direct contrast to the Pyncheons, just as the bourgeois is in direct contrast to the aristocracy. He breathes life, while they suffocate in death.

The problem with Holgrave's characterization is the rapidity with which he becomes a conservative. The conflict, incipient in his spirit of scientific detachment and his penchant for dabbling in mesmerism and other pseudo-sciences, is well-communicated to the reader; but Hawthorne had to resolve his liberal tendencies in order to render him

fit for the heroine. To be the proper spouse of Phoebe and to symbolize the happy union of the Pyncheons and the Maules, Holgrave quickly discards his liberal tendencies and becomes a conservative with money and property, a solid representative of that order which he theoretically despises. His rapid transformation smacks too much of opportunism. Hawthorne may approve of his change, but the reader does not; it seems too close to sentimental romance.

The characterization of Phoebe, although sentimental in conception, is less flawed in execution. Created to symbolize the regeneration of the Pyncheons, she would seem at first glance to fit the category of the traditional Gothic heroine. Her pattern of imagery is sunshine and flowers, and she exudes a pure radiance. But she is too plebian for a Gothic heroine: she works at industrious pursuits. Not a girl to sit idly by playing the lute, she sings while cleaning the house or cooking the meals. She, like Holgrave, undergoes a change. Though it is not so dramatic as the daguerrotypist's, it is nevertheless real and more convincing. When she first comes to the Pyncheon house, she is in the first bloom of youth; but only a few weeks in the house alter her. Her beauty deepens and matures; her sunshine grows conscious of shadows on the horizon. Hepzibah comments on the change as Phoebe readies herself for a short trip home:

> "Ah, Phoebe," remarked Hepzibah, "you do not smile so naturally as when you came to us! Then, the smile chose to shine out;--now, you choose it should. It is well that you are going back, for a little while, into your native air! There has been too much weight on your spirits. The house is too gloomy and lonesome; . . ." (II, 219).

Upon Phoebe's return, Hawthorne describes her in similar terms:

> It was Phoebe! Though altogether not so blooming as when she first tript into our story--for, in the few intervening weeks, her experiences had made her graver, more womanly, and deeper-eyed, in token of a heart that had begun to suspect its depths--still there was the quiet glow of natural sunshine over her (II, 297).

The brilliant radiance has become a quiet glow through Phoebe's contact with the house.

As a romantic heroine, Phoebe may not be suitable for twentieth century tastes. She is reminiscent of sentimental Victorianism at its most cloying. As a memorial to Sophia, his wife, Hawthorne perhaps renders Phoebe somewhat too ideally. But in comparison with Hawthorne's other blondes, Priscilla and Hilda, she is vital and conceived with a good deal more actuality. If the twentieth century reader lays aside his prejudices, he will recognize in Phoebe that perception of the nature of reality which works contrary to the saccharine of the ideal presentation of her character. At least in relation to Phoebe, as much as Hawthorne wished to present goodness, he could not ignore the evil which goodness meets and cannot necessarily overcome unscathed. The small,

undramatic change in Phoebe's character, even as it is becoming to her beauty, affirms the reality of evil as much as the reality of good.

In Hepzibah, the older female character, Hawthorne combines affection and regret in the portrayal of an aged, outmoded aristocrat. Hepzibah believes herself the creme de la creme in a world which favors gingerbread. Hawthorne recognizes the uselessness and ludicrousness of her position as an aristocrat during a time in which aristocracy has no meaning in either public or private life. Hawthorne utilizes epic similes and allusions to point out the ironic contrast between what Hepzibah thinks herself to be and what she in fact is. The cent-shop is not even a successful enterprize until Phoebe takes over. As a symbolic representation of the house, Hepzibah is as outmoded as it is.

Hawthorne treats her problem with sympathy. She does not possess the hard-heartedness of one strain of the Pyncheons. If she were to be summed up in one phrase, it would be "Leave me in peace." Despite the scowling exterior, Hepzibah has a heart which overflows with love for Clifford, for Phoebe, and even for Holgrave and Uncle Venner. She is isolated from the mainstream of life only accidentally.

The problem that is posed in relation to Hepzibah is how to resolve her situation. She cannot remain in a delusional past. In their individual ways, Phoebe, Holgrave,

and Judge Pyncheon demonstrate this impossibility. She cannot live in the present, as the church-going and railroad scenes illustrate. Hawthorne provides a happy ending for her in an escape to a rural utopia with money and with her loved ones around her. What seems to be a situation with tragic, or at least serious, implications is given a sentimental resolution. Let her remain an aristocrat, but give her money to make her role viable. Poetic justice is in operation: Hepzibah is good; Hepzibah is rewarded. Unfortunately, the solution does not match the seriousness of the problem posed. The genteel, impoverished aristocracy trying to hold on in a world which scorns what they are and what they stand for is a worthy problem. Hawthorne, however, cannot come to grips with the tragic solution. Instead, he evades the issue to promulgate a gospel of sentimentality.

In a narrower sense, the same criticism applies to Clifford; however, the problem that Hawthorne raises in this characterization is that of aesthetic isolation. Returned to his ancestral home after a long and unjust imprisonment, Clifford is a study in disintegration. What was vibrant and young in the Malbone miniature is now only half-alive and fast decaying. Clifford's tenuous hold on life is centered on his ability to enjoy sensuous pleasures--food, soap bubbles, Phoebe's beauty. He can only look and enjoy in a limited sense; but his response is minimal and his

participation negligible. He is a broken man who might have enjoyed the aesthetic pleasures of life had he lived out his years in freedom.

Strangely enough, from Hawthorne's moral perspective, Clifford's imprisonment was perhaps a blessing because it protected him from aesthetic isolation. The appreciation of the beautiful for Hawthorne implied as dangerous a state as the Judge's egoism or Holgrave's magical powers. Clifford's enforced isolation prevented a more serious, wilful isolation which would have destroyed him more irrevocably because the destruction would have been spiritual, not physical.

Neither Clifford nor Hepzibah has a precedent in the gallery of Gothic characters. Both function within the novel as exampla of thematic concerns which are Hawthornian in essence. The aged spinster and the burnt-out aesthete represent the outmoded aristocracy whose claims are specious and whose hopes are fantastic. They can no longer exist comfortably in a changing world that has passed them by. The nineteenth century spirit of progress, symbolized variously in Phoebe, Holgrave, and Judge Pyncheon, proves too powerful against the weak flicker of gentility sparkling in Clifford and Hepzibah.

The two characters exist in the Gothic framework of the house, and they have imbibed the atmosphere for too long a time to remain untouched by it. Hepzibah's fantastic

dreams are of ghosts and of mystery; Clifford's imprisonment contains more than a little of the Gothic spirit. But the Gothic is only at the periphery of their characterizations. Their representation of the last Pyncheons dramatizes the theme expressed in the Preface and reflected throughout the novel, specifically of the inherited curse or, more generally, of the influence of the past on the present.

The dramatization of the theme splits the novel into two poles of interest: the past replete with all the Gothic trappings and the present with an imaginative perception of the wide-spread revolution towards modernity. The techniques of atmosphere and plot remain close to an amazing degree to their Gothic models. The techniques of characterization are of a more mixed nature. The success of the novel depends upon Hawthorne's success in molding the two types of techniques into a unified work. The success, unfortunately, in no way matches the artistic unity of The Scarlet Letter. The contrast between the Gothicism and the modernity is indeed productive of drama; but the plot cannot bear the close scrutiny of an analysis which seeks a cogent, logical development of Hawthorne's stated interests. The ending does not meet one's expectations either in terms of plot or of character. The Gothic atmosphere bears down on the sunnier aspects of the novel so that the vision of decay and death is more impressive than the utopian sanctuary in which the characters finally reside. The house is stronger than the cottage.

CHAPTER V

THE BLITHEDALE ROMANCE: MUTED GOTHICISM

In the novels that Hawthorne wrote before The Blithedale Romance, the centrality of Gothicism is indisputable; however, critical opinion on Hawthorne's reliance on Gothic techniques in the utopian novel differs rather markedly. Jane Lundblad, for example, states that

> In the evolutionary curve that may be traced of the dependence on Gothic art in Hawthorne's work, The Blithedale Romance stands as the point of maximum independence between the starting-point of recently imbibed youthful impressions and the harking back to old sources in the works of his later years.[1]

Hyatt Waggoner, on the other hand, opines that "When we had hoped for a gallery of portraits and a re-creation of historical details, we find instead the most Gothic of Hawthorne's romances."[2]

Paradoxically enough, both of these evaluations contain a certain amount of truth. In comparison with Fanshawe or The Scarlet Letter, The Blithedale Romance depends on many fewer Gothic techniques; and yet there remains all the business concerning Westervelt and mesmerism. Where the reader rather hopefully expects a roman à clef exposing Brook

[1] p. 129.

[2] p. 188.

Farm, he gets instead the Veiled Lady, children of unknown parentage, and an interpolated ghost story. Waggoner himself puts his finger on the difficulty in his discussion of the novel's pessimism.[3] Much better than a satiric portrait of a utopian community, the novel undermines transcendental optimism through its analysis of the more bitter aspects of human nature. This novel is, above all, a novel of character, the area in which Hawthorne has demonstrated his independence of Gothic techniques. To set the tone of the novel, Hawthorne does utilize Gothic techniques of atmosphere and plot; but the pessimism stems from the character analysis. Lundblad's estimation of Hawthorne's independence from Gothicism, therefore, is closer to the truth than Waggoner's estimation in judging the novel's overall effect.

In atmosphere and plot, Hawthorne falls back on the Gothic for gloomy atmosphere and mysterious action. In this novel, however, he does not take over atmospheric techniques univocally. Rather, he chooses the imagery of the theatre and the masquerade to externalize the theme of concealment, inherent as the major problem of each of the characters. The metaphor of the theatre perfectly corresponds to the characters' internal conflicts; and, although the device of the theatrical or masquerade image is not directly Gothic, the artistic purpose for Hawthorne of creating the proper

[3]p. 201.

atmospherical medium is similar to the Gothicists' need for a sympathetic milieu in which to play out the action.

In the preface to The Blithedale Romance, Hawthorne's defense of his methodology sounds very much like Horace Walpole's defense of the supernatural:

> . . . his [the author's] present concern with the Socialist Community is merely to establish a theatre, a little removed from the highway of ordinary travel, where the creatures of his brain may play their phantasmagorical antics, without exposing them to too close a comparison with the actual events of real lives. In the old countries, with which Fiction has long been conversant, a certain conventional privilege seems to be awarded to the romances; his work is not put exactly side by side with nature; and he is allowed a license with regard to every-day Probability, . . . Among ourselves, on the contrary, there is as yet no such Faery Land, so like the real world, that, in a suitable remoteness, one cannot well tell the difference, but with an atmosphere of strange enchantment, beheld through which the inhabitants have a propriety of their own (III, 1-2).

Hawthorne had to work to create an atmospheric medium which closely approximates what in Gothic novels is inherent in the setting. Hawthorne's recognition of the Gothic novelists' success leads to an imitation of their methods. "Phantasmagorical antics," "Faery Land," and "enchantment" are the terms for Gothic atmosphere. In The Blithedale Romance, Hawthorne chooses the metaphor of the theatre to concretize these terms within the texture of the novel.

Allusions to the theatre, acting, masks, and masquerades recur frequently in the novel. This imagery can produce an atmosphere of mystery by setting up a screen between the

reader and the action of the novel. Of its nature, drama is at one remove from reality. The observer must interpret action as it corresponds to his perception. In this novel, point of view necessitates limited perception; and the characters' penchants for concealment encourage removal from truth directly given. On a literal level, the imagery substitutes mystery for openness and makes Hawthorne's task of creating an intermediate atmosphere between the actual and the imaginery that much simpler. On a symbolic level, the imagery corresponds with the secret lives of the characters. It is partly Hawthorne's intention to demonstrate that a utopian community cannot survive if the members cannot be honest.

Coverdale, first of all, looks upon his part in the social experiment as that of a spectator at a drama. After becoming firmly entrenched in his role, he defends his actions almost as if to defend the point of view that Hawthorne has chosen to tell the tale:

> My own part, in these transactions, was singularly subordinate. It resembled that of the Chorus in a classic play, which seems to be set aloof from the possibility of personal concernment, . . . Destiny, it may be--the most skilful of stage managers--seldom chooses to arrange its scenes, and carry forward its drama, without securing the presence of at least one calm observer. It is his office to give applause, when due, and sometimes an inevitable tear, to detect the final fitness of incident to character, and distil, in his long-brooding thought, the whole morality of the performance (III, 97).

The effect of such a passage is to distance the reader from

the subject in an almost Conradian fashion as Marlow's function as narrator in "The Heart of Darkness" or Lord Jim. The action must be interpreted because appearances are deceiving; the appearances are a performance of some more real, deeper drama.

Hawthorne distances the reader first from the subject matter and second from the reality of the action through the use of the imagery of the theatre and through the choice of point of view. The artistry is certainly quite different from the less sophisticated methods employed by the Gothic novelists; but the effect of creating a distinctively mysterious atmosphere is ultimately the same.

The reader is always conscious of Coverdale watching as if, indeed, a play were being performed for his benefit. The list of occasions on which Coverdale is the audience is almost tiresomely long. At the novel's beginning, he watches the performance of the Veiled Lady. At Blithedale, he observes Zenobia and Westervelt from his tree-top hermitage. He watches Zenobia from across a courtyard in the city. Upon his return to Blithedale, he is caught up in a masquerade party as a nonparticipant.

The masquerade approximates Gothic atmosphere in the hidden or secret revelry of the actors. Hawthorne actualizes the imagery pattern in this scene. The costumes reflect a heterogeneous mixture of styles from Classical antiquity and

native Americana to contemporary dress in Silas Foster, who appears at the revel as a sardonic onlooker. The bacchic festival is analogous to Hawthorne's dramatizations of similar scenes in "Young Goodman Brown" and "My Kinsman, Major Molineux." The subject-matter is different, but the impulse of abandonment is the same. Hawthorne contrasts the air of revelry with Foster's appearance, Coverdale's anxiety, and the tension of the drama that has just ended in the real-life battle between Hollingsworth and Zenobia.

The Veiled Lady episodes (Chapters I and XXIII), on the other hand, reflect a more straightforward Gothic interest. Hawthorne was always interested in mesmerism, evident, for example, in the characterizations of Chillingworth and Holgrave. In The Blithedale Romance, the focal point of the mesmerism theme lies in Professor Westervelt. The whole treatment indicates the method by which Hawthorne could adapt what is essentially a Gothic device to a modern framework. According to critical opinion, it is not a successful adaptation; nevertheless, Hawthorne found it necessary to employ this "magical" subplot to represent the manifestation of the popular movement toward spiritualism in mid-nineteenth century America.

In the Veiled Lady episodes, Hawthorne attempts to adapt a Gothic theme to suit a modern purpose; but he also employs Gothic techniques in a much more traditional fashion.

For example, Hawthorne relies on the use of the storm during Coverdale's first journey to Blithedale and again at Coverdale's discovery of Zenobia in the city. The sequences of Coverdale's forest hermitage iterate Hawthorne's proclivity for mystery and secrecy in a wilderness setting. Above all, the search for Zenobia's body is as Gothic in tone as any scene in Hawthorne's novels. The search transpires in the midnight darkness; and Hawthorne, typically enough, uses the moon to provide an eerie light contrast:

> The moon, that night, though past the full, was still large and oval, and having risen between eight and nine o'clock, now shone aslantwise over the river, throwing the high, opposite bank, with its woods, into deep shadow, but lighting up the hither shore pretty effectually. Not a ray appeared to fall on the river itself. It lapsed imperceptively away, a broad, black, inscrutable depth, keeping its own secrets from the eye of man, as impenetrably as mid-ocean could (III, 232).

The discovery of the body itself passes beyond the realm of Gothic chills. The realistic description of rigor mortis surpasses even the melodramatic horror of the charnel house novels of the later Gothicists. As a matter of fact, George Eliot accuses Hawthorne of too much realism in this whole scene.[4] Ironically, Hawthorne has in this scene relied much more on the actual than his own theory would have permitted.

In total effect, the Gothic atmosphere of The Blithedale Romance is more external than in the previous novels.

[4]James D. Rust, "George Eliot on The Blithedale Romance," Boston Public Library Quarterly, VII (1955), 210.

In many respects, Hawthorne inclined toward the same techniques that he heretofore had depended upon; but the techniques are more incidental to the theme and subject matter of the novel. The recurrent imagery of the drama evokes different responses than the techniques of Gothic gloom. This pattern of imagery focuses upon the mystery or secretiveness of personality and character. One does not receive the impression of the all-encompassing darkness that pervades the settings as in The Scarlet Letter or the sense of brooding that the central symbol of the house provides as in The House of the Seven Gables. The Gothic atmosphere in The Blithedale Romance is at once more subtle and less essential. The techniques are subtly incorporated into the texture, but the focus is essentially upon character.

The Gothicism of the plot may be regarded in the same manner and defended in the same terms. Critics have censured Hawthorne for not writing a novel about Brook Farm. Robert C. Elliott, for example, analyzes the lack of point of view or judgment on Hawthorne's part in relation to the utopian community. The Blithedale Romance in essence is not satire.[5] The plot instead creaks with Gothic mannerisms; and the Veiled Lady replaces what could have been an outstanding satire of a particular transcendental community.

[5]"The Blithedale Romance" in Hawthorne Centenary Essays, ed. Roy Harvey Pearce (Columbus, 1964), pp. 103-117.

The story that Hawthorne did tell, however, was a satire of human nature. The Veiled Lady is as intimate a part of the story in this connection as the hoeing and gardening sequences. The relationship between the plot techniques and Gothicism is Hawthorne's study of character concealment.[6] Herein, the Gothicism works smoothly with Hawthorne's purpose in analyzing a given group of characters who have been drawn to this community. Daniel Hoffman comments on the plot's apparent Gothicism in this context:

> Gothicism in Blithedale is less a matter of setting or of magic than of the manner of telling the tale: Coverdale's story is involuted, complex, mysterious, but the mysteries prove functionally necessary to a romance that demonstrates the difficulties of knowing the primal facts about ourselves.[7]

The novel begins with what appears to be an arbitrary episode, Coverdale's visit to the Veiled Lady's performance and his later encounter with Old Moodie. The mystery and the Lady's magical powers grip Coverdale's imagination; and Moodie's secretiveness adds to the sense of the unknown. The shift to the Blithedale community heightens the mystery still further as, one by one, the major characters appear. Whether symbolically or really, each character is not what he seems. Zenobia's name is a pseudonym; Hollingsworth does not stand

[6]The most detailed analysis of this theme appears in Waggoner, pp. 192-195.

[7]"Myth, Romance, and the Childhood of Man," in Hawthorne Centenary Essays, ed. Roy Harvey Pearce (Columbus, 1964), p. 217.

for the commitment to the community that his presence implies; and Priscilla appears as a totally unknown identity.

The process of the novel for Coverdale and for the reader is the discovery of the reality of the characters and of the proper relationships between them. Hawthorne follows the Gothic procedure of combining supernaturalism--in this case Westervelt and mesmerism--with the theme of unknown parentage. Zenobia's ghost story and Old Moodie's narrative bring to light the proper relationships between Zenobia, Priscilla, and their father. Viewed as a novel of discovery, The Blithedale Romance admirably integrates the Gothic mechanics.

The difficulty in pinpointing the occurrences of Gothic techniques in this novel is related to the manner in which Hawthorne integrated the techniques into the novel. The greater difficulty of separating techniques of plot and atmosphere is a result of Hawthorne's concentration on character. A list of plot and atmospheric techniques indicates that Hawthorne relied on them less often than in his previous novels; and, after the first chapter, the Gothic is subordinate to the thematic study of character.

The extent of Hawthorne's departure from the Gothic cast of characters is evident from the fact that The Blithedale Romance has two villains, two heroines, and no hero. Moreover, the typical love triangle is distorted; and the

archetypal fear situation of villain chasing heroine is subtly transformed to heroine chasing villain. In the characterization of Westervelt and in the split into the dark and the light heroine, Hawthorne is following a recognizably Gothic pattern; but the characterizations of Hollingsworth and Coverdale are pure Hawthorne.

In attributing Gothic traits to his characters, Hawthorne has often given his hero characteristics commonly associated with the Gothic villain and vice-versa. In The Blithedale Romance, Hawthorne eliminates the hero altogether and divides the villain into two characters: Westervelt, a pure Gothic type, and Hollingsworth, a Hawthornian type. Westervelt, the mesmerist, has an evil eye, a serpent's cane, and the Devil's mannerisms. Through the use of his magical powers, he commits the grave Hawthornian sin of controlling another human being. His handsome exterior is a sham, evident symbolically from his set of false teeth; and his kindness hides a brutal possessiveness over both Priscilla and Zenobia. He has Priscilla openly under his control in her guise as the Veiled Lady, but he exerts a subtly forceful influence over Zenobia.

Through his mesmerism, Westervelt exercises control over other human beings. According to one critic, his mesmerism symbolizes for Hawthorne not only the invasion of another's integrity, but also the crass materialism of the

times.[8] Adapted to personify interest in pseudo-science, Westervelt personifies a character for whom Hawthorne has little sympathy. To give body to this characterization, Hawthorne borrows the Gothic concept of evil magic, and in the process Westervelt becomes a lukewarm version of the Gothic hero.

Hollingsworth, the major villain of the novel, personifies a Hawthornian center of interest rather than a Gothic derivative. Hollingsworth has become enamored with the idea of reform, and for him philanthropy is a way of life. What Hawthorne demonstrates through Hollingsworth's character is that the philanthropic ideal carries more import than the criminals who personify the need for Hollingsworth's good works. As his intellect has attached itself to the idea of reform, his heart has cooled toward the criminal. Zenobia most acutely identifies Hollingsworth's failing: "It is all self! . . . Nothing else; nothing but self, self, self!"

Hawthorne cuts through Hollingsworth's philanthropic mask to reveal the core of egoism in the blacksmith's heart. In Hollingsworth, Hawthorne studies one of his most pressing concerns: the death of the heart. Dedication to an ideal which divorces one from participation in the human community is a grave sin in Hawthorne's catalogue. Hollingsworth's

[8]Richard Harter Fogle, Hawthorne's Fiction: The Light and the Dark (Norman, Okla., 1964), p. 169.

evil is much more serious than Westervelt's because of its isolating effect. If Westervelt's evil reflects materialism, Hollingsworth's flaw cuts deeper into the spiritual foundation of the soul. Evil lurking under the guise of good causes irreparable damage both to the self and to others.

As there are two villains, so are there two heroines, Zenobia and Priscilla, vying for the reader's attention. Their roles correspond to the light-dark dichotomy found in Hawthorne's novels from the Hester-Phoebe axis of the previous two novels to the Miriam-Hilda polarity in The Marble Faun. Priscilla and Zenobia represent innocence versus experience within the novel; and, as usual, Hawthorne prefers innocence as the enduring value, however interesting and appealing he might present experience.

Zenobia in her personification of experience is comparable to the evil female characters in the Gothic novel who usually function as extensions of the villain. The parallel in The Blithedale Romance is Zenobia's mysterious connection with Westervelt. The reader never ascertains the details of the relationship, but the presumption of a past sexual liaison is implicit and causative of the guilt and secrecy.[9] The facet of her sexual experience renders her appealing both to Coverdale and to the reader. Coverdale imagines her

[9]Fogle, p. 173.

nude in what is perhaps the most overtly sensual scene in Hawthorne.

As quickly as Coverdale figuratively redresses her, Zenobia hides behind a mask of concealment. Her name is a pseudonym used in writing tracts on sexual equality. The reader never learns her real name, only of her connection with Old Moodie and Priscilla. Her motives for joining the Blithedale community are never made explicit. Coverdale asserts that she does not belong there, and the action of the novel confirms his suspicion that her motives have more to do with an attachment to Hollingsworth than an attachment to Blithedale.

Zenobia's past and present relationship commitments fail. Her connection with Westervelt causes her to give Priscilla back to him for his evil purposes. Her relationship with Hollingsworth does not succeed. He rejects her, and she commits suicide. All of the negative force of Zenobia's past leads to her act of self-destruction. Her relationships with Westervelt and Hollingsworth contrast with her public success as a woman of the world. Her trademark, a rare flower, becomes artificial during the course of the novel, as artificial as her external behavior. She is the true exotica unable to exist in the New England countryside and to take part in the plebian tasks of the utopian community.

Zenobia is punished for the reason that her relationship with Westervelt unites her with his evil power over Priscilla. The sexual implications for Hawthorne do not lighten her burden of guilt. Needing secrecy to conceal her past, Zenobia adds hypocrisy when she joins Blithedale. The combination of the secrecy and the hypocrisy forces her to mask herself, and her punishment is justified for Hawthorne in this failure of openness and honesty.

The positive force of the novel resides in Priscilla, who, ironically, at the novel's beginning is literally concealed as the Veiled Lady. She is the Hawthornian adaptation of the Gothic heroine; and she is in the company of her blonde heroines, Phoebe and Hilda. Priscilla differs from Phoebe in the respect that, while the latter was saved from loss of spiritual integrity, the former is under the control of evil powers. Priscilla's action in the novel seems to be to cling to some more powerful character. Her love, however, overcomes all the superior forces around her; and it is she who becomes the most powerful force, surviving Zenobia and nursing the broken Hollingsworth.

As a Gothic heroine, Priscilla is passive and apparently ineffectual. Westervelt controls her, but she escapes from him to reside in anonymity in the Blithedale community. Zenobia returns her to Westervelt; but, in a scene most closely analogous to the Gothic, Hollingsworth dramatically

rescues Priscilla.

The Hawthornian adaptation renders Priscilla as a source of love and truth.[10] In the novel, she is the most purely giving of the characters. At first, she attaches herself to Zenobia, and she seeks Zenobia's love as the love of a sister. She also devotes herself to Hollingsworth, who turns to her in failure as a true source of strength.

Unlike Phoebe, Priscilla is more acted upon than acting. Priscilla's goodness is less believable because Hawthorne posits it rather than dramatizes it. Like the Gothic heroine, she is the pawn of superior forces; and, as a result, she is too weak to fulfill adequately the redeeming function that Hawthorne gives her. She is more the representation of symbolic goodness than the believable character whose goodness evolves from the tension of the exposure to evil. As she more closely approximates the characterization of the "pale, young maiden" of the Gothic novel, she is less successful than Phoebe whose characteristics diverge from the Gothic foundation.

The last character to be considered, Miles Coverdale, has no Gothic foundation. His function as narrator places him at the center of the novel's action, yet he is not the hero in any traditional sense. A minor poet by vocation, he

[10]Roy R. Male, Hawthorne's Tragic Vision (Austin, 1957), p. 149.

is part voyeur and all spectator in the Blithedale community. He gets neither heroine and only reveals his ineffectual love for Priscilla in the last line of the novel. Hawthorne's characterization of Coverdale is modern in the sense that it is a precursor of the narrative techniques involving point of view as employed by Henry James. The characterization of Coverdale, furthermore, is more in the mold of the modern anti-hero than in the traditional mold of the salvatory hero of the Gothic novel.

It is Coverdale's role to be the interpretive medium between the matter of the novel and the reader, just as the imagery of the drama is the medium between the matter of the novel and Coverdale's perception of it. Coverdale strips the concealments from the characters as his knowledge of their real behavior grows. To be able to do this, he must be the observer, not the main actor. As a result, he comes off as a snoop or eavesdropper, instead of as hero or major participant. Through Coverdale, the reader witnesses the destruction of the Blithedale experiment.

In terms of technique, Hawthorne's conception of Coverdale is wholly divorced from the Gothic model. He has none of the characteristics associated with the Gothic hero. Coverdale's characterization is related to the Gothic experience only insofar as the point of view encourages mystery and secrecy.

The Gothic sense of mystery is undeniably present in The Blithedale Romance, but Hawthorne utilizes it as a metaphor for the analysis of character. Gothicism slips in the back door by virtue of Hawthorne's proclivity for it as a communicatory medium. The Blithedale Romance is the least Gothic of Hawthorne's novels because Hawthorne's vision cuts deeply into the truth of human character wherein Gothicism can be utilized only as a metaphor. Hawthorne's concern is to demonstrate the failure of the Blithedale community through the weakness and the hypocrisy of its major participants. The novel's pessimism has no need to depend upon the melodrama of Gothicism for its central atmospheric medium. In Hawthorne's conclusion, the tragedy of character can stand alone.

CHAPTER VI

THE MARBLE FAUN: GOTHICISM ON NATIVE GROUNDS

After a flush of creativity out of which Hawthorne produced three major novels in as many years, a comparatively long silence followed in his writing career during which he was actively engaged in governmental service. His duties took him to Europe, and he resided in both England and Italy. The latter country gripped his imagination; and, finally, in 1859 Hawthorne published his last completed novel, The Marble Faun, based on his impressions of Italy.

The Marble Faun represents both another attempt to confront the complexity of sin and guilt and a resurgence of the Gothic spirit after the deemphasis noted in the study of The Blithedale Romance. The thematic axis of The Marble Faun deals with the psychological and moral consequences of murder and raises the issue of the educative power of sin. The introduction of this theme is not surprising to the student of Hawthorne, but critical estimation of its successful amalgamation into the novel is unfavorable. One opinion, for example, is, "To put bluntly what we may take as given--Hawthorne was up to The Scarlet Letter and was not up to The Marble Faun."[1] This response indicates the difficulty in

[1]Roy Harvey Pearce, "Hawthorne and the Twilight of Romance," Yale Review, XXXVII (Spring 1948), 487.

evaluating a novel in which the various technical components--plot, character, theme, and atmosphere--are unsuccessfully integrated. The elements of atmosphere and ambiguity are familiar enough from Hawthorne's previous work; but they are the only elements successfully managed in a novel which tries to balance the moral equation of the Fortunate Fall. The equation cannot be worked because Hawthorne was not only unsure of all of the equation's parts but also of how to dramatize its parts. The result is an unintentional confusion from which one can only respond to Hawthorne's imaginative appreciation of Italy.

Hawthorne rejoiced in Italy, the ne plus ultra for Gothicists of mysterious atmosphere. Also for Hawthorne the land exhibited an enchantment which he regarded as central for the creation of his kind of imaginary atmosphere. Italy was the Shangri-La for which he had been searching throughout his American career. He wrote in the preface:

> Italy, as the site of his [the author's] Romance, was chiefly valuable to him as affording a sort of poetic or fairy precinct, where actualities would not be so terribly insisted upon as they are, and must needs be, in America. No author, without a trial, can conceive of the difficulty of writing a romance about a country where there is no shadow, no antiquity, no mystery, no picturesque and gloomy wrong, nor anything but a commonplace prosperity, in broad and simple daylight, as is happily the case with my dear native land. It will be very long, I trust, before romance-writers may find congenial and easily handled themes, either in the annals of our stalwart republic, or in any characteristic and

> probable events of our individual lives. Romance and poetry, ivy, lichens, and wall-flowers, need ruin to make them grow (R, VI, 15).

The "mystery" and "gloomy wrong" are general terms for the atmospheric and plot contents of a Gothic novel, and Hawthorne himself speaks of the search for a fairy precinct which the Gothicists had found in Italy. Moreover, the nature of the theme made the Italian setting absolutely necessary.[2] Contrary to his judgment of America's prosaic atmosphere, Hawthorne did manage rather successfully to adapt the materials of his native land for Gothic purposes. The Scarlet Letter and The House of the Seven Gables are replete with the Gothic spirit; however, in The Marble Faun Hawthorne's appreciation of the atmospheric possibilities of Italy united with the thematic concern of the moral growth of an individual involves Hawthorne's creative confrontation of Gothicism on native grounds.

In the use of settings and supernatural incursions, Hawthorne demonstrates his familiarity with Gothic example throughout the novel. The settings include all the staple areas of Gothic interest: catacombs, graveyards, castle, and the like. One excursion early in the novel finds the artists exploring the catacombs:

> The intricate passages along which they followed their guide had been hewn, in some forgotten age,

[2]Gary J. Scrimgeour, "The Marble Faun: Hawthorne's Faery Land," AL, XXXVI (1964), 271.

> out of a dark-red, crumbly stone. On either side were horizontal niches, where, if they held their torches closely, the shape of a human body was discernible in white ashes . . . (R, VI, 39).

Above ground, Hawthorne meditates on a topic which was a favorite among the Gothicists. In describing the Borghese Gardens, Hawthorne reminds the reader of the oddity of building a ruin:

> What a strange idea--what a needless labor--to construct artificial ruins in Rome, the native soil of ruin! But even these sportive imitations wrought by man in emulation of what time has done to temples and palaces, are perhaps centuries old, and, beginning as illusions, have grown to be venerable in sober earnest. The result of all is a scene, pensive, lovely, dream-like, enjoyable and sad . . . ; a scene that must have required generations and ages, during which growth, decay, and man's intelligence wrought kindly together, to render it so gently wild as we behold it now.
>
> The final charm is bestowed by malaria. There is a piercing, thrilling, delicious kind of regret in the idea of so much beauty thrown away, or only enjoyable at its half-development, in winter and early spring, and never to be dwelt amongst, as the home scenery of any human being. For if you come hither in summer, and stray through these glades in golden sunset, fever walks arm and arm with you, and death awaits you at the end of the dim vista. Thus the scene is like Eden in its loveliness; like Eden, too, in the fatal spell that removes it beyond the scope of man's actual possessions (R, VI, 92-93).

In the passage, one notes the lyricism with which the idea of the ruin is bathed. This feeling is similar to the Radcliffean sense of time as the ultimate victor of all worldly objects. To this, Hawthorne adds the dimension of natural fear connected with disease and death. One's appreciation of the ruin thus becomes tinged with awe in the knowledge of the

lurking danger hidden amidst the beauty. Hawthorne's attitude matches the Gothicist's sense of place and the always attendant possibility of fear. In this sense, Hawthorne is correct in the assumption that Italy affords a more sympathetic habitat for his purposes.

Fear remains an intimate part of Rome's atmosphere. Death is a referent for the emotional states of the characters from their early visit to the catacombs to Miriam's and Donatello's visit to the Capuchin cemetery after their cooperation in the monk's murder. It is ironic that their visit coincides with the funeral of their victim; and Hawthorne effectively conveys the fearsome atmospheric sense of guilt through the recurrent images of death, specifically in the narrative emphasis on the tomb, the skull, and the skeleton (R, VI, 224-228).

Finally, Hawthorne includes a castle, the ancestral home of Donatello. Railo describes it as "the traditional terror-romantic haunted castle of Mrs. Radcliffe /which/ appears in The Marble Faun at Kenyon's approach to Monte Beni."[3] In The House of the Seven Gables, Hawthorne could only include the castle by analogy; he had to transform the Salem house into a castle-like structure with symbols of mystery and fear. By accretion, these images with their Gothic associations turned the Pyncheon mansion into the

[3]The Haunted Castle, pp. 168-169.

equivalent of a Gothic castle. In The Marble Faun, the Italian setting allows Hawthorne to introduce a castle without effort; and, true to his Gothic inclinations, Hawthorne's edifice resembles its Gothic equivalent very closely:

> About thirty yards within the gateway rose a square tower, lofty enough to be a very prominent object in the landscape, and more than sufficiently massive in proportion to its height. Its antiquity was evidently such, that, in a climate of more abundant moisture, the ivy would have mantled it from head to foot in a garment that might, by this time, have been centuries old, though ever new. . . .
>
> Up and down the height of the tower were scattered three or four windows, the lower ones grated with iron bars, the upper ones vacant both of window-frames and glass. Besides these larger openings, there were several loopholes and little square apertures, which might be supposed to light the staircase, that doubtless climbed the interior toward the battlemented and machiolated summit. With this last-mentioned warlike garniture upon its stern old head and brow, the tower seemed evidently a stronghold of times long past (R, VI, 250).

Hawthorne emphasizes the warlike past of Donatello's castle and the building's antiquity. Both of these aspects are similar to the Gothic penchant for interest in the Medieval period. Hawthorne can allow himself the luxury of including the Castle without alteration and without apology. His preface-statement speaking of Italy as a faery-land admits to his interest in the Gothic evident throughout his career; in this novel, however, this interest can be explored in depth without the necessity of technique doing the work that the description of a native (Italian) setting can accomplish.

If Hawthorne demonstrates his bias for Gothic settings to clothe his narrative with an atmosphere of mystery

and gloom, he shows an equal fondness for the ambiguity of the supernatural incursion. From the beginning of his career, Hawthorne used the technique of ambiguity; and The Marble Faun proves no exception. The major example in the novel is the question of Donatello's ears. Hawthorne compares the young nobleman to the Faun of Praxiteles, the epitome of natural man. Donatello's affinities to the Faun extend symbolically to include the concept of the prelapsarian man whose "soul is sense" and whose nature is untainted with original sin. The Faun's tie with the animal world is a set of furry, pointed ears, a physical characteristic Donatello himself is reputed to possess. In the early sections of the novel, the characters raise the question about Donatello's ears; but he adamantly refuses to show them his ears, hidden behind masses of long hair. The question is left unanswered until the novel's conclusion when it is raised for the last time:

> "Only one question more," said I [the author], with intense earnestness. "Did Donatello's ears resemble those of the Faun of Praxiteles?"
>
> "I know, but may not tell," replied Kenyon, smiling mysteriously. "On that point, at all events, there shall be not one word of explanation" (R, VI, 527).

Despite the rather specious nature of this particular example of Hawthorne's ambiguity, the treatment of this quasi-supernatural phenomenon duplicates Hawthorne's technique familiar from Fanshawe and from every succeeding novel. In

The Marble Faun there is the same refusal to solve a problem posed, the same aversion from confronting the complexity of the moral nature of the world. Donatello's resemblance to a pre-Adamic sylvan creature suggests a myriad of moral possibilities, but Hawthorne leaves the reader in the realm of conjecture.

In the same manner, also connected with Donatello, are the legends of the wine and of the water-sprite. The wine, called Sunshine, is Donatello's family's special heritage and would sour if sold or transported from its natural environs. Donatello himself tells Kenyon the story of the water-sprite who appeared to one of the young Count's ancestors. One day the Count came to cleanse his hands of guilt in the pool in which the nymph dwelt. He contaminated the pool, and the nymph appeared to him one last time with blood on her brow.

The ambiguity of the wine surrounds Monte Beni with the suggestive mystery and superstition common to old European families. The ambiguity of the water-sprite symbolizes Donatello's own guilt. In both cases, Hawthorne found it desirable to develop the mythological or supernatural implications of his narrative. In neither case, however, is there a direct statement of magic or of the supernatural; the force of legend and myth does the work of creating the atmosphere which is recognizably Gothic.

The settings in a like manner create their own magic.

Hawthorne seemed quite impressed by the Borghese Gardens; and the imagery that he uses to describe its magical qualities is common not only to his own interest in the land midway between the actual and the imaginary, but also to the imaginative suggestiveness that Gothic novelists utilize to induce mystery in atmospheric surroundings:

> Donatello saw beneath him the whole circuit of the enchanted ground; . . . It was as beautiful as a fairy palace, and seemed an abode in which the lord and lady of this fair domain might fitly dwell, and come forth each morning to enjoy as sweet a life as their happiest dreams of the past night could have depicted (R, VI, 95).

The Borghese Gardens, therefore, function both as an actual locale and as a setting where the not-quite-real can occur. The dance which spontaneously erupts and as quickly evaporates can be believed because of Hawthorne's preparation for this episode which would in itself strain the reader's credulity.

The quick disappearance of the dancers leads directly to a further development of the mystery. Hawthorne creates ambiguity by concealing from the reader full knowledge of the situation because for no apparent reason the dance abruptly ceases:

> Whether it was that the harp-strings were broken, the violin out of tune, or the flautist out of breath, so it chanced that the music had ceased, and the dancers come abruptly to a pause. All that motley throng of rioters was dissolved as suddenly as it had been drawn together. In Miriam's remembrance the scene had a character of fantasy (R, VI, 111).

The fantasy becomes sinister for Miriam because her model suddenly appears. He casts a deathlike pall over the atmosphere as if he were a walking apparition of Satan. The model has an interview with Miriam which Hawthorne intentionally does not dramatize. Instead, he dons the pose of the limited narrator in the chapter entitled "Fragmentary Sentences":

> Owing, it may be, to this moral estrangement [secret guilt],--this chill remoteness of their position,--there have come to us but a few vague whisperings of what passed in Miriam's interview that afternoon with the sinister personage who had dogged her footsteps ever since the visit to the catacomb. In weaving these mystic utterances into a continuous scene, we undertake a task resembling in its perplexity that of gathering up and piecing together the fragments of a letter which has been torn and scattered to the winds. Many words of deep significance, many entire sentences, and those possibly the most important ones, have flown too far on the winged breeze to be recovered (R, VI, 114-115).

This pose of ignorance is directly related to Hawthorne's principle of ambiguity insofar as the concealed information maintains the reader in a suspenseful state regarding the nature of the Miriam-model relationship. As the novel concludes, the relationship is never fully explained, thus asserting in a true sense the ambiguity on which Hawthorne consistently relies so that he need not try to explain what may well be unexplainable.

When one considers the murder episode, one notes Hawthorne's use of all the resources at his command to invest the action with a sinister atmosphere. Although the Italian

setting aids him through its evocation of antiquity and mystery, Hawthorne returns to his favorite image of the moonlight, an image independent of geography:

> Mosses grew on the slight projections, and little shrubs sprouted out of the crevices, but could not much soften the stern aspect of the cliff. Brightly as the Italian moonlight fell a-down the height, it scarcely showed what portion of it was man's work, and what was nature's, but left it all in very much the same kind of ambiguity and half-knowledge in which antiquarians generally leave the identity of Roman remains (R, VI, 199).

In this description of the Tarpeian Rock soon to be the scene of the model's death, Hawthorne himself calls attention to the physical ambiguity produced by the moonlight which cannot penetrate into the depths over the cliff. The effect of such a description creates the necessary tension between the knowledge which sunlight gives and the mystery which is a functional part of the moon's lesser light. That the time is nearly midnight adds a further fearful touch to the preparation for the homicidal act which will shortly occur.

Close attention needs be paid to the murder sequence because this episode demonstrates both Hawthorne's dependence on and his freedom from Gothic antecedents in plotting The Marble Faun. His dependence is evident from the use of murder as central to the plot; the murder is complexly integrated into the decadent atmosphere of Rome that Hawthorne carefully created. The murder is further supported in its Gothic similarity through its connection with hidden past

guilt. The relationship between Miriam and her model-shadow is intentionally never fully explored or analyzed. Shrouded in mystery, the relationship culminates in an eruption of violence which introduces the intense study of the effects of guilt, a theme at the core of Hawthorne's conception of the novel.

The violent action itself separates the plot from a strictly Gothic framework. The Gothic novelist was fond of flirting with the possibilities of violence or had it occur as a result of supernatural forces. Only Matthew Lewis of the Gothicists indulges in exaggerated brutality and grotesque torture. Others like Walpole are content to let violence remain a supernatural prodigy or like Radcliffe to suggest the possible occurrence of violence without ever letting it intrude into the suspenseful mood of the action. Hawthorne not only introduces the violence of a murder, but has it occupy a central position in the thematic framework of the plot.

As in The Scarlet Letter, within the thematic framework, Hawthorne utilizes the Gothic in order to explore the moral concern of the possible educative value of sin. Hidden guilt, mysterious disappearances, disguise, and a mysterious stranger are familiar if one has read any Gothic novel. From these devices, however, Hawthorne constructed a plot which details the moral developments of the principal characters.

Hawthorne spins out the moral histories of his characters in structural divisions which carry each of the principals from innocence to experience. Although loosely organized, the novel can be divided into four major sections, each of which focuses on the transformation of one of the characters: Miriam, I-XXIII; Donatello, XXIV-XXXV; Hilda, XXXVI-XLII; and Kenyon, XLIII-L.[4] This structure is not comparable to the tight unity of The Scarlet Letter; but it does have the advantage of concentrating the reader's interest on successive poles of interest amidst the diffuse digressions on Roman art, architecture, and geography culled directly from Hawthorne's journals.

In considering both atmosphere and plot, Hawthorne's dependency on Gothic techniques is nowhere more apparent than in The Marble Faun, whose setting is at last the sympathetic correlative of Hawthorne's gloomy interests. He uses these techniques in much the same way as he had in his previous work. The Gothic is the symbolic manifestation of the moral. The mystery of atmosphere externalizes the mystery of character and personality. The plot incidents of mystery and intrigue betoken the quest for answers to the questions posed about the moral problems of guilt and its consequences, of the transformation from innocence to experience, and of the paradox of the fortunate fall.

[4]Merle E. Brown, "The Structure of The Marble Faun," AL, XXVIII (November 1956), 303.

Hawthorne embodies these complex moral issues in a group of characters who illustrate both his independence from and reliance on Gothic techniques which have remained constant from the beginning of Hawthorne's novel writing. Like the characters in The Blithedale Romance, those in The Marble Faun do not fit quite so easily into the Gothic hero-heroine-villain categories. Again as in the previous novel, Hawthorne divides the four main characters into two couples, in this instance to personify moral guilt on the one hand and Puritan innocence on the other. Miriam and Donatello, the dark couple, carry the burden of the psychological analysis of sin and guilt, while Hilda and Kenyon exhibit the positive values which Hawthorne hoped that the reader would carry away with him.

Miriam and Donatello fuse characteristics adapted from Gothic techniques with developments from Hawthorne's interests. Donatello, the titular hero, resembles the Gothic villain in the intense psychological anguish which he must suffer. Hawthorne's proclivity for giving his heroes traits of the Gothic villain is a familiar phenomenon stemming from characters in his earliest novels, Fanshawe and Dimmesdale. In Donatello, Hawthorne studies a character developed by sin and its consequent guilt. Hawthorne's interest in this aspect of the human condition is usual and unvarying, but it separates the hero-figure from the one-dimensional Gothic role that is the hero's lot.

Hawthorne's interest in Donatello, however, takes a somewhat different turn from his own previous models of suffering men. Early in the novel, Hawthorne compares Donatello to Praxiteles' Faun, symbolic of the amorality of prelapsarian man. Less rational than animal, Donatello epitomizes the pagan ideal of man, alien to the Christian concept of mankind suffering under the blight of original sin and its deleterious effects on the moral consciousness.

Donatello's commission of murder separates him from the pagan ideal and alters him by developing the previously dormant sense of conscience. In this phase, Donatello resembles the Gothic villain who undergoes intense internal suffering. Hawthorne's focus on Donatello's change raises the moral issue of the educative value of sin. Kenyon points out evidence of the change and the response to be taken to it:

> "A wonderful process is going forward in Donatello's mind, . . . The germs of faculties that have heretofore slept are fast springing into activity. The world of thought is disclosing itself to his inward sight. He startles me, at times, with his perception of deep truths; and, quite as often, it must be owned, he compels me to smile by the inter-mixture of his former simplicity with a new intelligence. But, he is bewildered with the revelations that each day brings. Out of his bitter agony, a soul and intellect, I could almost say, have been inspired into him" (R, VI, 325-326).

This theme of knowledge through sin manifests Hawthorne's interests in the Edenic myth. It adds a dimension to the internal struggle which evokes sympathy from the reader. The observation of the character's moral development separates

Donatello from the Gothic villain whose struggles are never clearly known. Ironically, the fact that Donatello is a murderer is of less importance than the reality of the anguish which brings humanity and maturity to the erstwhile Faun.

Suffering caused by hidden guilt unites Donatello with Dimmesdale. For both men, an immoral act produces grave consequences, far graver than the punishment imposed by external authority. In both cases, Hawthorne raises a moral question which he does not answer. Dimmesdale's ultimate salvation is uncertain, while Donatello's moral development seems attributable to sin. In neither case does Hawthorne resolve the issue, evidence again to support the ambiguity at the very core of Hawthorne's moral vision.

Ambiguity is equally applicable to Miriam, the artist, who encourages Donatello to commit murder. The ambiguity of her character is factual since so little is known of her past. Ignorance of her extends to the present in her relationship with the mysterious model. Hawthorne never fully explains the mystery surrounding Miriam, although one critic maintains flatly that the spring of all her actions is guilt over a past incestuous relationship.[5]

Eino Railo points out Hawthorne's dependence on the Gothic for Miriam's characterization:

[5]Brumbaugh, p. 403.

> The mysterious artist Miriam, whose gestures and demeanour frequently create an atmosphere of enigma, is in reality none other than Matilda [of The Monk], though purified from the influence of evil and become a woman of fine ideals. The way in which the strange plot is developed, its recourse to the old machinery of terror-romance and many traits in Miriam herself bear witness to how close the story of Ambrogio clung to the author [Hawthorne] while the poetical history of Donatello, the human faun, was being written.[6]

Miriam also resembles Hawthorne's other suffering dark heroines, Hester and Zenobia. Miriam, like them, seems to suffer for and through her sexuality, although she is perhaps the most overtly guilty as an accessory to murder. She carries much of the negative weight of the moral theme, for in bringing Donatello to moral maturity she loses him. But, like Hawthorne's other dark heroines, she does not seem to repent her participation in the crime.

It is Miriam's lot to suffer for being what she is--to Hawthorne, at least, a representative of the decadence of Europe. Hawthorne's connecting her with a European, or more specifically Mediterranean, past aligns him with the Gothic attitude toward Italy as the center of mystery, sin, and intrigue. Good Protestant that he was, Hawthorne also resembles the Gothicists in his mistrust of Catholicism, of which Miriam was an adherent. These hereditary and religious factors are additional evidence of her resemblance to the Gothic villainess.

[6]p. 266.

If Donatello and Miriam fuse Gothic with moral characteristics, so too do Kenyon and Hilda represent a fusion of the Gothic techniques for characterizations of hero and heroine with Hawthorne's search for positive moral values. The two, American emigres in Italy, assert the Puritan values of seriousness and industry, rendering them similar to Hawthorne's other sunny couple, Holgrave and Phoebe.

Kenyon, the sculptor, is unlike Holgrave; there is little internal struggle and no change. He is as uninteresting as any Gothic hero. Kenyon's colorless presence in the novel is defensible in his (Gothic) role as Hilda's savior and, more importantly, as a mouthpiece for the exposition of the paradox of the fortunate fall. His lack of conviction in it is proven when he drops consideration of its possibility after Hilda's abrupt dismissal of conversation on the topic. Kenyon is unfortunately mediocre in everything that he does, but he comes into his own at the last when he wins the hand of Hilda. He is to return to America with her to live out a presumably dull marriage. Functionally, Kenyon fulfills the role of the Gothic hero as the protector and ultimate spouse of the heroine.

Hilda herself resembles a Gothic heroine too closely for a satisfactory characterization. She is another of Hawthorne's attempts to assert the reality of a positive value system. Less successful a characterization than Phoebe,

Hilda suffers from an excess of moral superiority. Her brush with evil is closer than Phoebe's, but her subsequent actions are indefensible except in a very narrow interpretation of innocence. Hilda does suffer, but it is anguish in relation to herself, relieved by confessing to the priest in St. Peter's. Her treatment of Miriam is analogous to the Puritan elders' treatment of Hester--all justice and no mercy.

The problem with Hilda's characterization is that Hawthorne apparently likes her and wishes the reader to emulate her course of action. Hawthorne has carefully built Hilda's characterization to illustrate all the admirable qualities of American Puritanism in contrast to the decadent sophistication of Italian Catholicism. It is, for example, Hilda's very important duty to settle the dispute over the fortunate fall theme:

> "Oh, hush!" cried Hilda, shrinking from him with an expression of horror which wounded the poor, speculative sculptor to the soul. "This is terrible; and I could weep for you, if you indeed believe it. Do not you perceive what a mockery your creed makes, not only of all religious sentiments, but of moral law? and how it annuls and obliterates whatever precepts of Heaven are written deepest within us? You have shocked me beyond words!" (R, VI, 520).

Although it is impossible to decide whether or not Hilda is speaking for Hawthorne at this point, it is clear that she is speaking for that part of her creator which wishes the subject to be closed. Hilda's speech also indicates symbolically that the proper response to these complex moral

questions is withdrawal.[7] Hawthorne dramatizes her withdrawal symbolically as the Dove of Innocence.

In most respects, Hilda, the dove, resembles the typical Gothic heroine. She is an idealized beauty, more acted upon than acting; she is even abducted and released under mysterious circumstances. She brushes against evil which in no true sense touches her. She is close to the Gothic heroine in her artistic pursuit of copying, a far more feminine approach than Miriam's attempts at creation itself. Hilda finally marries the proper hero and escapes from the dangers of Italy to the Edenic shores of her native land.

The only other character of any importance is Miriam's model, a pure Gothic type. He resembles the traditional Gothic villain in his omnipresence, his sinister aura, and his mysterious hold over Miriam. He exemplifies Hawthorne's tendency to depend upon the Gothic for minor figures in his novels, a category in which one can also place characters such as Mistress Hibbins and Professor Westervelt.

The characterizations as a whole illustrate the extent to which the Gothic penetrates into The Marble Faun. Not since Fanshawe has Hawthorne depended so fully on Gothic prototypes for his own characters. In the middle novels

[7]Virginia Ogden Birdsall, "Hawthorne's Fair Haired Maidens: The Fading Light," PMLA, LXXV (1960), 253.

independence of characterization marked a goodly part of his artistic achievement; but in The Marble Faun two of his major characters are defective, due to a close similarity to the flat characterizations of the Gothic hero and heroine. His analysis retains its acuity, but in this novel it is limited to the darker side of the human character. And the acuity does not even go the whole way that the theme cries out for.

The Marble Faun is Hawthorne's only completed novel set in the very heart of Gothic territory. Italy captured Hawthorne's imagination, yet the achievement does not match the expectation. Freed of the difficulty of creating a gloomy atmosphere, Hawthorne should have been able to explore all of the facets of the problem that the novel raises. This, unfortunately, does not happen. The novel is clogged with Gothic atmosphere, plot, and even characterization; but the only true Hawthornian element that can be latched onto is the sense of ambiguity. The ambiguity, however, is either absurd (Donatello's ears) or superficial (the fortunate fall). A sense of restraint impedes the exploration of the educative aspects of sin, and ultimately through Hilda Hawthorne withdraws from the problem. What is left is a Gothic framework without the incisive confrontation of the moral life which would have given the framework the vitality of an external symbolic referent for the internal mystery of the human condition.

CHAPTER VII

HAWTHORNE'S UNCOMPLETED NOVELS: GOTHICISM TRIUMPHANT

Even before beginning work on The Marble Faun, Hawthorne had in mind a romance which would transform his experiences in England into a story of the comparison and the conflict between English and American cultures.[1] He put aside this work, putatively titled The Ancestral Footstep, to concentrate on the Romance of Monte Beni. After Hawthorne returned to America, he incorporated some of the material from The Ancestral Footstep into a new project, later edited and entitled Dr. Grimshawe's Secret by his son Julian. Getting nowhere with this work, Hawthorne developed another idea into a long preliminary draft called Septimius Felton. A fourth attempt, The Dolliver Romance, remained uncompleted at his death.[2]

[1]For the biographical data surrounding the composition of the fragments, I am indebted to Edward H. Davidson's study, Hawthorne's Last Phase (New Haven, 1949).

[2]Davidson has more than adequately demonstrated that the published texts are not faithful to Hawthorne's manuscripts, especially in the case of Dr. Grimshawe's Secret; however, since the determination of accurate text is outside the bounds of my study, I have chosen to use the available published works, Volumes XI and XIII of the Riverside edition.

Psychological probing aside, what these four fragments demonstrate is Hawthorne's return to the Gothic impulse from which his writing originally sprang. In these fragments, the Gothicism is not merely implicit or influential, but wells up from the depths of his imagination in both manner and matter. The psychological reasons for Hawthorne's return to primary reliance on Gothicism do not lie within the boundaries of this study, although, to a degree, biography does lend credence to the renewed influence of Gothicism in the fact that during this period Hawthorne returned to reading Sir Walter Scott.[3]

Whatever the reasons, the themes which Hawthorne chose to explore were favorites of the Gothicists. Two major themes evolved from Hawthorne's meditations. The first, divided into two parts, provides the substance of The Ancestral Footstep and Dr. Grimshawe's Secret. One part analyzes the confrontation of English and American cultures as represented by separated members of the family. The second part explores the purpose of the reunion, an ancient wrong done which forced one member of the family to emigrate to America. The young American returns to England to try to solve the mystery of the Bloody Footstep which is supposedly related to his ancestor's hasty departure from England; and, perhaps, the young man can regain

[3]Davidson, p. 8.

an inheritance that is rightfully his. This theme of family mystery and guilt resembles not only Hawthorne's previous interest (The House of the Seven Gables), but harkens back to the essential plot prototype of the Gothic novel cited by both Devendra Varma and Eino Railo.[4] The Castle of Otranto and The Old English Baron, to name only two Gothic novels, use the same thematic foundation.

The theme which runs through Septimius Felton and The Dolliver Romance is equally Gothic. The elixir of life theme has correspondences both in the Gothic novel and in Hawthorne's own work. Gothic novelists who employ this theme include William Godwin (principally in St. Leon[5]), E. T. A. Hoffman, Matthew Lewis and Charles Maturin. The latter two treat the theme in relation to an infernal pact with the devil, whereas Hawthorne, in a manner familiar to his readers, focuses more directly on the psychology of isolation. Hawthorne's own interest in the elixir of life theme goes back at least to the short story "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment" in the Twice-Told Tales collection.

Family guilt and the quest for an elixir vitae had intrigued Hawthorne, but only in the last works do they become the central core of the creative impulse. The Gothic antecedents of these themes are solid, and this influence

[4]Cf. Chapter I, p. 20.

[5]Davidson, p. 72.

on Hawthorne combined with his own predisposition toward these themes must have presented a strong appeal to his imagination which clothed them in Gothic apparel almost indistinguishable from their originals. In the three categories of atmosphere, plot, and character, almost no divergence need be discussed. The fragments represent a return to a Gothicism as sure and as direct as the Gothicism of Fanshawe and of the original Gothic novels themselves.

The atmosphere with which Hawthorne chose to develop his themes reflects their essential Gothicism. Both interior and exterior settings exude the mystery and gloom common to the Gothic experience. The settings also seem less a metaphor for moral investigation than a straightforward development of atmospheric surroundings. An outstanding example of an interior setting is Dr. Grimshawe's house. Hawthorne devotes the whole of the first chapter to a minute particularization of the house and its environs. The description precisely fits the Gothic model. The house with its dark, gloomy rooms is situated next to a cemetery, a playground for the young children who are the Doctor's wards. In the long description of the Doctor's study, Hawthorne hits upon a symbol which adequately typifies the morbid gloom not only of this particular setting, but of the Gothic novel as a genre:

> Of all the barbarous haunts in Christendom or elsewhere, this study was the most overrun with spiders.

> They dangled from the ceiling, crept upon the tables, lurked in the corners, and wove the intricacy of their webs wherever they could hitch the end from point to point across the window-panes, . . . Spiders crept familiarly towards you and walked leisurely across your hands. . . . If you had none about your person, yet you had an odious sense of one crawling up your spine, or spinning cobwebs in your brain. . . .
>
> All the above description, exaggerated as it may seem, is merely preliminary to the introduction of one single enormous spider, the biggest and ugliest ever seen, the pride of the grim Doctor's heart, his treasure, his glory, the pearl of his soul, and, as many people said, the demon to whom he had sold his salvation . . . (R, XIII, 9-10).

Spiders haunt the fragments, especially in Dr. Grimshawe's Secret and Septimius Felton, with almost obsessive regularity; but Hawthorne could not seem to make much of the symbol except, as in the passage quoted, to hint at the spider as a symbol of the infernal pact, a suggestion which is never really elaborated upon in this or any of the fragments.

Rooms similar to Dr. Grimshawe's are described in Septimius Felton and The Dolliver Romance. Since each of these explores the elixir vitae theme, Hawthorne would need to place his characters in workshops filled with alchemical appurtenances. Because he is more a student than a scientist, Septimius' room contains only a "few old books, its implements of science, crucibles, retorts, and electrical machines" (R, XI, 421). Professor Portsoaken's Boston abode is much more the wizard's precinct, even to the cobwebs and the gigantic spider borrowed from Dr. Grimshawe's Secret.

Dr. Dolliver's room is also much more overtly a laboratory in keeping with his vocation as an apothecary.

A second interior Gothic setting which figures importantly in the two earlier fragments is the English manor house. A traditional large park surrounds Braithwaite Hall; and, inside, the ancestral seat contains large dining halls, musty libraries, always found in Gothic castles,[6] and labyrinthine passages:

> . . . the old English mansion had not much of the stateliness of one of Mrs. Radcliffe's castles, with their suites of rooms opening one into another; but yet its very domesticity--its look as if long ago it had been lived in--made it only the more ghostly (R, XIII, 285).

The direct allusion to Mrs. Radcliffe indicates the focus of Hawthorne's imagination and the parallel attempt to evoke a similar kind of Gothic atmosphere.

Among the important exterior settings are the aforementioned English manor park and the cemetery adjacent to Dr. Grimshawe's house. A gravesite proves equally important as a setting in Septimius Felton. This is the burial plot of Cyril Norton, the man whom Septimius killed. Upon the grave grows the exotic flower, sanguinea sanguinissima, the one necessary ingredient missing from the formula for the elixir of life. A number of major plot incidents occur on or about the grave which casts a certain tone of ghoulish morbidity

[6]Arlin Turner, "Hawthorne's Literary Borrowings," PMLA, LI (1936), 557.

over these scenes and the novel as a whole.

The creation of atmosphere through setting is typically Gothic in style, but the creation of atmosphere through the use of the supernatural is more familiarly Hawthornian. In general, the supernaturalism of all the fragments stems directly from their thematic conceptions. Both the bloody footstep and the elixir of life are themselves extraordinary in nature, but over them Hawthorne casts the aura of legend or rumor. Mystery shrouds the origin of the bloody footstep in the stone of Braithwaite Hall. As usual with Hawthorne, the narrator suggests alternative explanations from the magical to the purely scientific or rational. Here Hawthorne's technique of ambiguity matches the earlier Gothicists' penchant for supernaturalism by suggestion. The demands of the plots of Dr. Grimshawe's Secret and The Ancestral Footstep perfectly suit an ambiguous interpretation, this latter so clearly a Hawthornian trait. There must be an inexplicable connection between the family mystery and the bloody footstep which a definite solution would destroy. If, as Davidson maintains, the failure of these fragments lies partly in Hawthorne's inability to make the symbol of the footstep his own as he had done previously with the Scarlet Letter and the other major symbols,[7] the footstep symbol, ironically enough, most suits the Gothic material of the plot. With

[7]Davidson, pp. 144 ff.

the symbol of the Scarlet Letter, the ambiguity proceeds directly from the moral dilemma; the bloody footstep, however, is a much more Gothic plot symbol, not nearly so intimately involved with a moral concept.

The supernaturalism inherent in the elixir of life theme follows a clearer Hawthornian pattern. Those characters in Hawthorne's tales and novels who pursue the folly of the eternal life or perfection are doomed to frustration and, often, death. The human desire for an immortal life, however deep-seated and positively oriented, isolates the seeker and draws him away from the common stream of humanity. Septimius' unhappiness stems from the monomaniacal drive to discover the formula for the elixir of life. His attempts lead to the death of his aunt and later to the sacrificial death of Sibyl Dacy. In The Dolliver Romance, Colonel Dabney, who hotly desires eternal life, dies immediately after drinking the elixir.

Alchemy and magic provide the direct link between the elixir and the supernatural. Aunt Keziah and Professor Portsoaken personify these dabblers. The old lady's Indian blood relates her to the mysterious lore of American native culture, and Professor Portsoaken's European background summons up the spell of forbidden knowledge that had been handed down from Medieval times and before. The Americanization of the European Gothic elixir theme recalls the early examples

of Fanshawe and The Scarlet Letter wherein Indian culture provides the American equivalent for the Gothic thrill.

In the fragments Hawthorne utilizes objects in the traditional Gothic manner. Prominent among the many objects strewn throughout the fragments is the secret manuscript in The Ancestral Footstep and Dr. Grimshawe's Secret. The manuscript reveals the heritage of Middleton or Redclyffe as the rightful owner of the English properties. Hawthorne handles this example in the same manner as the Gothicist. Other objects, treated similarly, are the spying place of Lord Braithwaite, the flower necessary for the elixir potion in both Septimius Felton and The Dolliver Romance, and finally the obtrusive spiders, already mentioned as an apt symbol of the Gothic spirit.

In all the techniques pertaining to atmosphere, Hawthorne seemed at this point in his writing career to be using Gothic novels as textbooks. The atmosphere of all four fragments is unprevailingly mysterious and gloomy. The omnipresent graveyards and spiders cast a pall over the proceedings which seldom brighten in tone. The supernaturalism is an intimate part of the conceptions; but Hawthorne treats the phenomena with an ambiguity that is typical of his earlier methods, yet is admirably suited to the atmosphere of mystery. The traditional handling of minor devices further asserts Hawthorne's dependence on Gothic models. There is no novelty, only well-tried methods.

Hawthorne's plotting methods cannot be adequately evaluated since none of this work is a finished product. Comments can be hazarded only on the basis of the tentative ideas that Hawthorne had for working out the subject matter of each of the plots. In general, one might remark that the plots as they stand represent as pure a Gothicism as the atmosphere of the fragments.

It is again necessary to revert to a discussion of theme in order to demonstrate the relationship between Gothicism and plotting. Family mystery depends upon unknown identities, a favorite Gothic device, to maintain suspense. In Dr. Grimshawe's Secret particularly, Hawthorne relies on a series of encounters in the first part which are duplicated in the second part. One after another Redclyffe meets the people in England whom he had known or met during his childhood in America. Coincidence, another favorite Gothic device, here obtrudes as one by one the English characters become identified with their American counterparts, taxing the reader's credulity to the extreme. The concluding episode of imprisonment and rescue could have been lifted from any Gothic novel. The only difference is that the prisoner is the hero, not the heroine.

Septimius Felton also abounds in unknown identities and coincidences. The major example is the curious familial relationship between Septimius and Cyril Norton, the British

soldier he had killed. Although Hawthorne did not exploit this relationship, the suggestion of a family bond indicates that even in a novel devoted to an exploration of the elixir of life Hawthorne could not abandon the family theme.

Plotting, never one of Hawthorne's most notable abilities in the longer works, remains so sketchy that one could be certain of little material that would stand in the completed work. Characters are moved on and off with wooden inefficiency, and languor infects most of the longer scenes. Through it all, however, episodic structure, unknown identities, coincidences, and imprisonments reflect the Gothic sense of plotting.

As with plot, so too with characterization; Hawthorne mostly just sketched in traits which one expects he would have developed into fully drawn characters in later revisions. As the characterizations stand, however, with one or two exceptions, they fall into fairly neat categories equivalent to their counterparts in the Gothic novel.

The one fully drawn characterization difficult to categorize is Dr. Grimshawe, who is rather like a male version of Hepzibah Pyncheon. He possesses a number of perverse, slightly villainous characteristics. He is unpleasantly gruff and dedicated to a pseudo-scientific analysis of cobwebs. There is more than a suggestion of the quack about him, and his scientific devotion seems somewhat like

Westervelt's. Fiercely independent, he isolates himself from the stream of the community, nursing his long-time grudge in a brandy bottle. He is, however, a kindly, generous man, protective of his wards. Partly a wizard, partly a grouch, Grimshawe, nevertheless, is drawn with no little affection. Hawthorne disapproves of Grimshawe's pseudo-scientific dabbling and isolation, but the old man's honest affection for the children redeems him from unalloyed villainy. Hawthorne's other similar portrait, Dr. Dolliver, is hardly more than a sketch, but enough is drawn to judge him an even more kindly version of Dr. Grimshawe.

Three authentic villains appear in the fragments. The first, Professor Portsoaken, closely resembles Westervelt; and he is a vulgarization of Dr. Grimshawe. Portsoaken's pursuits lie wholly in the areas of alchemy and magic. He has studied much about the lore of the elixir of life; and he regales Septimius with tales of the possibility of immortality, spurring on the young man in his search for the proper formula. Portsoaken resembles Dr. Grimshawe in his penchant for spiders, but Hawthorne's disapproval of Portsoaken is more direct and unambivalent. The second villain, Colonel Dabney, is a reworking of Judge Pyncheon. Dabney manifests the same pride and coldness of heart. A third villain, Lord Braithwaite, appears to be modeled after Mrs. Radcliffe's example. As current

possessor of the family estate, Lord Braithwaite arouses the suspicions of his neighbors. Part of their suspicion springs from his foreign birth, for in true Gothic fashion he is Italian. A description of him bears a marked similarity to Montoni or Manfred:

> [Lord Braithwaite] was a tall, dark man, with a black moustache and almost olive skin, a slender, lithe figure, a flexible face, quick, flashing, mobile. His deportment was graceful; his dress, though it seemed to differ in little or nothing from that of the gentlemen in the room, had yet a grace and picturesqueness in his mode of wearing it (R, XIII, 249).

His sleek exterior conceals Mediterranean deviousness. His invitation to Redclyffe to visit the manor house strikes one as a suspicious maneuver, and the reader's response proves correct. Lord Braithwaite tries to get rid of Redclyffe by imprisoning him. From typically Gothic motives, the lord wishes to retain possession of the estate to which he is afraid Redclyffe is entitled. In the characterization of Lord Braithwaite, there is little that is typically Hawthorne, but much that is typically Gothic.

The heroes of the fragments are also typically Gothic or derivative Hawthorne. Middleton of The Ancestral Footstep is the sketch of an uninteresting young man without personality. So too is Redclyffe in Dr. Grimshawe's Secret, except that as a child he exhibits a real, embarrassed pride over his unknown ancestry. Hawthorne offers Septimius Felton as yet another portrait in the series of doomed intellectuals.

Septimius is a reworking of Fanshawe with the addition of the desire for forbidden knowledge. The inclusion of a secondary hero, Robert Hagburn, in this fragment further adds to its resemblance to Fanshawe. This group of heroes, true to their Gothic prototypes, is an unimpressive lot.

A quartet of heroines is equally unimpressive, again either slavishly Gothic or derivative Hawthorne. Alice, the elder Elsie, and Rose Garfield duplicate Hawthorne's portrait of Phoebe or Hilda. Hawthorne stresses the innocent abroad aspect and/or the spiritedly independent American woman. Industrious, sprightly, high-minded, these characters are reworkings of the blonde heroines without the touch of vibrancy necessary for believability. The younger Elsie and Pansie, a bit more successful characterizations, add further homage to Una in the Pearl vein. These young girls possess the fey lightness and quicksilver vigor that Hawthorne admired in his daughter as a child.

The only woman in whom one has a certain interest, scant as it might be, is Sibyl Dacy, the stranger from abroad in Dr. Grimshawe's Secret. Done in the manner of Hawthorne's dark heroines, Sibyl is not bathed in the same rosy optimism as the other young women. Mystery surrounds Sibyl, and evil hovers around the periphery of her circle of influence. Come to seek revenge for the death of her lover Cyril Norton, Sibyl foils her own attempt to murder

Septimius by herself drinking the fatal elixir, dying to save the man with whom she has fallen in love.

The other women who appear in the fragments, Hannah and Aunt Keziah, are purely Gothic in type, resembling Hawthorne's witch figure Mistress Hibbins. Both Hannah and Keziah are descended from Indians, and both possess magical abilities. Their devotion to demonic arts, though not directly asserted, is enough hinted at to make the point.

The characterizations in the fragments are not notable. The lack of individuality in these characterizations is related to their identity with Gothic characters or with characters from Hawthorne's earlier novels. The psychological acuity common in earlier characterization is missing here, with one or two exceptions. A certain fatigue in Hawthorne's manner is evident from the characterizations, as if to indicate that the creation of a vital human being was almost too much of an effort for him.

Fatigue in Hawthorne's manner might be deduced as a general characteristic for the fragments. What one can only call a resurgence of Gothicism saturates these fragments from conception to execution. Thematically, the attempts are overtly Gothic; and atmosphere, plot, and character reinforce the primary dependence on Gothicism from the treatment of the large blocking-out stages to the handling of the minute particulars. Wherever Hawthorne diverged from basic Gothic

technique, it was to rework his own material in an inferior manner. Much of these fragments differs little from Fanshawe. Hawthorne ended his career as he began it with a genuflection to the Gothic novel.

CHAPTER VIII

HAWTHORNE AND GOTHICISM

Modern biographers have destroyed the image of Hawthorne as a lonely recluse producing works of genius from his isolated study; but a part of this romantic image proves to be valid with respect to the influence of Hawthorne's extensive reading in the Gothic novelists on his work. Randall Stewart's biography, which offers a strong case for Hawthorne's lifelong involvement in society, nevertheless notes the prodigious amount of reading that Hawthorne did during his youth and early manhood.[1] Jane Lundblad quotes letters to his sister from the years 1819 and 1820 which list the fiction that he was reading. Almost exclusively romantic, the novelists are Scott (all the Waverley novels except The Abbot), Smollett (Ferdinand Count Fathom and Roderick Random), Radcliffe (The Mysteries of Udolpho), and Godwin (Caleb Williams).[2] Hawthorne's relationship to Gothicism follows a curious, but recognizable, pattern throughout his writing career which, however, was flexible enough to allow for his divergence from Gothicism.

[1]Nathaniel Hawthorne: A Biography (New Haven, 1948), pp. 27-28.

[2]Nathaniel Hawthorne and European Literary Tradition (Cambridge, 1947), pp. 34-35.

When Hawthorne first turned to composition, he chose Sir Walter Scott as a literary model. Fanshawe bears Scott's imprint in manner and matter. Recognizing its derivative nature and its general inferiority, he tried to have all the manuscripts of Fanshawe destroyed. He turned to the short story and did not again approach the longer form for more than twenty years.

He returned to the longer form with the accomplishment of an artist. The Scarlet Letter, the product of his artistic maturity, represents the high-water mark of his career; and it too reflects the influence of Gothicism. There is a great difference, however, in Hawthorne's treatment of Gothicism in The Scarlet Letter as compared with its treatment in Fanshawe. The Gothicism of The Scarlet Letter conveys the properly gloomy tone appropriate to play out the tragic action, and Hawthorne integrates the Gothicism into the novel's fabric with sure control. The issues of The Scarlet Letter are moral, and the Gothicism proves an apt metaphor for the dark moral side of nature which Hawthorne explores. Not used for its own sake, the Gothicism supports the moral interpretation of the tale.

The House of the Seven Gables contains an equally serious moral point, the influence of guilt on future generations. More generally, the relationship between the past and the present proves equally important in the dramatization

of the family chronicle. Much of the action takes place in contemporary times, and Hawthorne manages successfully to Americanize the Gothicism to the extent that traditional Gothic techniques seem indigenous as an American contribution. The Gothicism is relevant as a metaphor for the past and its influence on the decayed, modern-day Pyncheon family. Hawthorne effectively Americanizes the Gothicism in order to use it as an expressive means to convey the sense of mystery that he wanted the house to exude. The Gothicism jostles with the American folkways in a not totally unsuccessful fusion. At least, the Gothicism is as real as the political rallies and the organ grinder who pass along the street outside the haunted mansion.

The Blithedale Romance is also grounded in Hawthorne's own times as he takes up a dramatization of the problems of establishing a utopian community. Not a roman à clef in the traditional sense, The Blithedale Romance deals with the human problems and the human weaknesses which militate against the success of any kind of utopian venture. Hawthorne's manipulation of Gothicism takes a different tack in the development of the theme of The Blithedale Romance. Gothicism appears partly in the narrative form and partly in the theme concerning the modern interest in pseudo-science. Coverdale's detective-like investigation of the members of the community allows for the narrative to take on the

structure of a mystery story. The Zenobia-Priscilla family relationship unites the mystery of identity with the Veiled Lady theme that Hawthorne interweaves with the establishment and the failure of the community. The role that Gothicism plays in this novel, although real, is the most dispensable.

The Gothicism of The Marble Faun, on the other hand, is an intimate part of the novel's conception. Hawthorne's novel of Italy takes full advantage of the Gothic possibilities of the geography of Rome and of the countryside. In the imaginations of the Gothic novelists, Italy symbolizes the spirit of mystery essential for their tales of fright or horror. Hawthorne responds to this spirit, and The Marble Faun is Hawthorne's one novel in which the Gothicism need not be Americanized or otherwise adapted to suit an American locale. To be sure, Hawthorne's thematic interest remains identifiably his own; but Gothicism in Italy breathes more freely in the atmosphere of intrigue and corruption, generally personified by the all-encompassing influence of the Roman Catholic Church. Hawthorne is able without apology to introduce a castle or a catacomb and to milk the settings for whatever gloomy atmosphere each can provide. The Marble Faun benefits from Hawthorne's command of Gothic technique in a story in which the gloomy atmosphere facilitates the dramatization of an equally gloomy moral fable.

Hawthorne's command of Gothic technique is the only

remaining characteristic in a group of fragments which seem to return in spirit to the beginnings of the author's career. In all respects, Gothicism runs unchecked through the fragments and stands as the unifying factor in a dismal set of failures. Hawthorne's fascination with the Gothic is nowhere more apparent than in the fragments in which theme, atmosphere, plot, and character are imitative or derivative. Melodramatic intra-family squabbles over inheritances and the devotion to the discovery of an elixir of life are nothing if not Gothic themes. Even Hawthorne's prior interest in these themes affords no new development in the analysis of their moral implications. He had already dealt with both themes earlier in a better manner. What remains is the grotesque image of a gigantic spider.

From Fanshawe to The Dolliver Romance, all of Hawthorne's longer works manifest the Gothic spirit in technique. To describe Hawthorne's general relationship to Gothicism in the novels, a mathematical analogy may be pertinent and illustrative. The relationship is like a parabola, the base line being the Gothic. At one end of the curve, Fanshawe as an imitation is close to the base of Gothicism. As Hawthorne developed, Gothicism becomes a controlled tool for moral exploration as in The Scarlet Letter and fully Americanized as in The House of the Seven Gables, each novel being successively higher on the curve. At the

high-point of the curve, The Blithedale Romance asserts Hawthorne's greatest independence of Gothicism, which becomes a relatively minor technique in the face of larger issues. With The Marble Faun, the curve turns again toward the Gothic base as Hawthorne depends upon the Gothic implications of Italy. Finally, in the fragments, the curve returns to the base as the influence of Gothicism again predominates and is absolutely essential for meaning.[3]

This description is not meant to assert Hawthorne's conscious desire to break away from Gothic techniques. None of the novels are free of them. The description rather suggests the manner in which Hawthorne controlled the Gothic or utilized it in relation to theme. Nor does the description suggest a critical evaluation by which the novel most independent of Gothic techniques is thereby the best. The Blithedale Romance is not the best of Hawthorne's novels. Evaluation of Hawthorne's use of Gothic techniques must be based on the manner by which Hawthorne integrated them into the novel. According to this criterion, The Scarlet Letter is the better novel because the integration of Gothicism into the whole fabric is more surely accomplished. Gothicism proves to be a most apt metaphor for the moral theme of the novel. The surrounding mystery and gloom highlight the

[3]Cf. Jane Lundblad's more general statement of the relationship, quoted in full, Chapter V, p. 93.

study of guilt, hypocrisy, and revenge. Hawthorne raises the melodrama of Gothicism to a tragic level in The Scarlet Letter, an admirable metamorphosis which assures the lasting influence of Gothicism as a technique far more than the Gothic novels themselves.

The adaptation of Gothicism to suit his own purposes is only one important area in which Hawthorne's revitalization of Gothicism makes a continued study of Gothicism relevant. Hawthorne's additions or alterations within the scope of Gothicism must not be ignored. Hawthorne brought many other influences and the mark of his own genius to his work, and one mark of his genius is certainly the revitalization of Gothicism. In three specific areas, he diverged from the traditional Gothic. He brought out the tragic implications of the techniques; he deepened the use of the supernatural; and he broke away from the mold of traditional types in his characterizations.

Hawthorne took from Gothicism the tragedy implicit in the melodramatic form. For the most part, the Gothicists sought to entertain their readers with a thrilling story. The earlier Gothicists attached a pious moral to their entertainments; the later Gothicists merely presented a story that would scare the daylights out of their readers. Scott reintroduced religion, just as in America Cooper included the uplifting religious sentiment; but both writers

essentially produced tales of adventure. The whole arsenal of Gothic techniques developed to extract a thrill or a gasp of fear from the reader was at Hawthorne's command. Hawthorne simply put the techniques at the disposal of more serious subject matter. Hawthorne found that the same techniques could cause fear even when the issues were of real moral interest. Adultery, family guilt, invasion of another's privacy, and the paradox of the fortunate fall are four areas of morality which Hawthorne clothed in Gothicism. The production of a gloomy and mysterious atmosphere worked at surrounding an action whose development would cause real and lasting fear of the omnipresent evil of the universe.

Hawthorne's elaboration of the techniques dealing with the supernatural follow directly from his serious and constant moral interests. Whereas Walpole apologized for the supernatural, Radcliffe introduced the rational explanation, and Lewis included the supernatural without qualification,[4] Hawthorne hedged on the supernatural with ambiguous explanations. From the very first novel, Hawthorne always provided the reader with multiple explanations for any phenomena which were not purely rational; and the nature of Hawthorne's moral quest demanded the inclusion of incidents which were not purely rational. Sometimes the interpretations are conflicting; sometimes they take the form of

[4]Cf. Chapter I, pp. 16-18.

legend or superstition or rumor; but never are there direct assertions. With this method, ambiguity exploits the supernatural by surrounding it with complexity and doubt. These latter responses are what Hawthorne was seeking from the reader. Uncertain himself about the nature of the spiritual world, Hawthorne chose the technique of ambiguity to dramatize it as the only viable method consistent with his own beliefs.

The third general area of departure from traditional Gothicism is in characterization. Part of the reason for the Gothic novel's failure to maintain popularity lies in its wooden characterizations. Unbelievably ideal, the hero and the heroine pale in the shade of the villain, the only interesting characterization in the Gothic novel. Hawthorne changed the balance of interest by deepening his hero and heroine while retaining the complexities of the villain. Often, Hawthorne simply gave the hero characteristics which were ordinarily the villain's; Hawthorne's hero, moreover, was not a paragon, but a sinner or a flawed human being. The heroine too was humanized; her contact with evil was real, and the woman grew thereby. Hawthorne scrutinized all of his characters with psychological penetration and human sympathy.

Some characters do remain close to their Gothic types. Hawthorne's blonde heroines owe much to the novel of sentiment from which the Gothicists borrowed the type. Only

Phoebe is an exception; she undergoes a change which Priscilla and Hilda do not. These heroines are the major exceptions to the rule of more vital characterizations including the characterizations which Hawthorne himself created independently of Gothic types. In his characterizations as in everything else, Hawthorne was no slavish imitator who could not produce revolutions of his own. If he had simply remained an imitator, he would not have the reputation which is deservedly his.

Hawthorne's departures from Gothicism are equally important as his dependence on it for so much that the twentieth century reader considers Hawthornian. At either end of his novel-writing career, Hawthorne was more overtly dependent on Gothicism than in the middle, but the major novels of the middle period exhibit sure control of Gothic techniques put to purposes basically similar to their use in the original Gothic novels, but immeasurably deepened by the degree of Hawthorne's vastly more serious exploration of human nature.

LIST OF WORKS CITED

Abel, Darrel. "Hawthorne's Dimmesdale: Fugitive from Wrath," NCF, XI (1956), 81-105.

_____. "Hawthorne's Hester," CE, XIII (March 1952), 303-309.

_____. "Hawthorne's House of Tradition," South Atlantic Quarterly, LII (October 1953), 561-578.

Baker, Ernest A. The History of the English Novel. Vol. 5. London, 1934.

Baskett, Sam S. "The (Complete) Scarlet Letter," CE, XXII (1961), 321-328.

Beebe, Maurice. "The Fall of the House of Pyncheon," NCF, XI (1956), 1-17.

Birdsall, Virginia Ogden. "Hawthorne's Fair-Haired Maidens: The Fading Light," PMLA, LXXV (1960), 250-256.

Birkhead, Edith. The Tale of Terror. London, 1964.

Bode, Carl. "Hawthorne's Fanshawe: The Promising of Greatness," NEQ, XXIII (June 1950), 235-242.

Brown, Charles Brockden. Edgar Huntly. Philadelphia, 1887.

Brown, Merle E. "The Structure of The Marble Faun," AL, XXVIII (November 1956), 302-313.

Brumbaugh, Thomas B. "Concerning Nathaniel Hawthorne and Art as Magic," American Imago, XI (1954), 399-405.

Chase, Richard. The American Novel and Its Tradition. New York, 1957.

Cowie, Alexander. The Rise of the American Novel. New York, 1951.

Davidson, Edward H. "Dimmesdale's Fall," NEQ, XXXVI (September 1963), 358-370.

_____. Hawthorne's Last Phase. New Haven, 1949.

Dillingham, William B. "Structure and Theme in The House of the Seven Gables," NCF, XIV (1959), 59-70.

Elliott, Robert C. "The Blithedale Romance" in Hawthorne Centenary Essays, ed. Roy Harvey Pearce (Columbus, 1964), pp. 103-117.

Fiedler, Leslie A. Love and Death in the American Novel. Cleveland, 1960.

Fogle, Richard Harter. Hawthorne's Fiction: The Light and the Dark. Norman, Okla., 1964.

Gerber, John. "Form and Content in The Scarlet Letter," NEQ, XVII (March 1944), 25-55.

Goldstein, Jesse Sidney. "The Literary Source of Hawthorne's Fanshawe," MLN, LX (January 1945), 1-8.

Gross, Robert Eugene. "Hawthorne's First Novel: The Future of a Style," PMLA, LXXVIII (March 1963), 60-68.

Hoeltje, Hubert H. Inward Sky: The Mind and Art of Nathaniel Hawthorne. Durham, N. C., 1962.

Hoffman, Daniel. "Myth, Romance, and the Childhood of Man" in Hawthorne Centenary Essays, ed. Roy Harvey Pearce (Columbus, 1964), pp. 197-219.

James, Henry. Hawthorne. New York, 1879.

Levy, A. J. "The House of the Seven Gables: The Religion of Love," NCF, XVI (December 1961), 189-203.

Levy, Leo B. "Picturesque Style in The House of the Seven Gables," NEQ, XXXIX (1966), 147-160.

Lombardo, Agostino. "Il Primo Romanzo di Hawthorne," Studi Americani, I (1955), 73-95.

Lundblad, Jane. Nathaniel Hawthorne and European Literary Tradition. Cambridge, 1947.

Maclean, Hugh. "Hawthorne's Scarlet Letter: 'The Dark Problem of This Life,'" AL, XXVII (March 1955), 12-24.

MacShane, Frank. "The House of the Dead: Hawthorne's Custom House and The Scarlet Letter," NEQ, XXXV (March 1962), 93-101.

Male, Roy R. Hawthorne's Tragic Vision. Austin, 1957.

Matthiessen, F. O. American Renaissance. New York, 1941.

Maturin, Charles. Melmoth the Wanderer. Lincoln, 1961.

Orians, G. Harrison. "Scott and Hawthorne's Fanshawe," NEQ, XI (June 1938), 388-394.

Pearce, Roy Harvey. "Hawthorne and the Twilight of Romance," Yale Review, XXXVII (Spring 1948), 487-506.

Praz, Mario. The Romantic Agony, tr. Angus Davidson. New York, 1956.

Radcliffe, Ann. The Mysteries of Udolpho. London, 1966.

Railo, Eino. The Haunted Castle. London, 1927.

Reeve, Clara. The Old English Baron. London, 1820.

Rust, James D. "George Eliot on The Blithedale Romance," Boston Public Library Quarterly, VII (1955), 207-215.

Schubert, Leland. "The Scarlet Letter" in Hawthorne the Artist: Fine Art Devices in Fiction (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1944), pp. 131-161.

Scrimgeour, Gary J. "The Marble Faun: Hawthorne's Faery Land," AL, XXXVI (1964), 271-287.

Stein, William Bysshe. Hawthorne's Faust: A Study of the Devil Archetype. Gainesville, Fla., 1953.

Stewart, Randall. Nathaniel Hawthorne: A Biography. New Haven, 1948.

Summers, Montague. The Gothic Quest. New York, 1961.

Tompkins, J. M. S. The Popular Novel in England 1770-1800, Lincoln, 1961.

Turner, Arlin. "Hawthorne's Literary Borrowings," PMLA, LI (1936), 543-562.

Van Deusen, Marshall. "Narrative Tone in 'The Custom House' and The Scarlet Letter," NCF, XXI (1966), 61-71.

Varma, Devendra. The Gothic Flame. London, 1957.

Waggonner, Hyatt H. Hawthorne. Cambridge, 1963.

Walpole, Horace. The Castle of Otranto. London, 1964.

Wheeler, Otis B. "Hawthorne and the Fiction of Sensibility," NCF, XIX (1965), 159-170.

Wieten, Alida A. Mrs. Radcliffe--Her Relation Toward Romanticism. Amsterdam, 1926.