A STUDY OF THE STYLISTIC TECHNIQUE OF NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

IN THE CREATION OF ROMANCE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Prefatory to The House of the Seven Gables, Nathaniel Hawthorne writes that a romance differs from a novel in "both its fashion and its material." Critics have long devoted themselves to the material of Hawthornian romance, but few have given more than perfunctory attention to the way in which that material is fashioned. In the preface, Hawthorne alludes to certain techniques in the creation of romance:

The point of view in which this tale comes under the Romantic definition lies in the attempt to connect a by-gone time with the very present that is flitting away from us. It is a legend prolonging itself, from an epoch now gray in the distance, down into our own broad daylight, and bringing along with it some of its legendary mist, which the reader, according to his pleasure, may either disregard, or allow it to float almost imperceptibly about the characters and events for the sake of a picturesque effect. 

Hawthorne himself evidently understood that romance could be created with mechanical elements of style as well as with the use of "romantic" content; however, students of the romanticist are neglecting one important facet of his work when they

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2 Ibid., p. 14; italics mine.
overlook the functions Hawthorne's style performs in the creation of the romances.

Richard Harter Fogle recognizes the value of a study of Hawthorne's stylistic techniques, asserting that the total author is appreciated only after "one grasps his concrete mechanics of telling a story." Fogle accounts for the paucity of critical comment on Hawthorne's style by remarking that these mechanical elements of prose—"patterns of his diction," "trends of his imagery," and "concrete mechanics"—are not easy to describe; therefore, "the advantage lies in seizing on thought and systematically analyzing it."

Hawthorne's style has too often been dismissed as being simply "rhetorical" or as being primarily decorative with its "purity and elegance." Although the romanticist's style is distinctly literary, and the critical tendency is to observe only its surface beauty, it is, in its technical elements, surprisingly functional.

In the foregoing quotation, Hawthorne reveals that he considers his fiction romance because of the "picturesque

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4 Ibid.
effect" he creates, evidencing a concern for the reader's acceptance of his fanciful tales. In the preface, he admonishes the reader that to attempt to apply the events in *The House of the Seven Gables* to an actual locality will endanger the author's "fancy pictures." On another occasion, he cautions that if the reader tries to hold him to a faithful representation of Brook Farm and its participants in *The Blithedale Romance*, he will be violating the author's "Faery Land." And in the preface to *The Marble Faun*, Hawthorne explains that Italy is the setting of the romance, not because he wished to comment upon the national character, but because it "was chiefly valuable to him as affording a sort of poetic or fairy precinct . . . ."

Of course, it is impossible to demonstrate conclusively that Hawthorne used his style to aid in creating the "fairy precincts" he believed would best suit his meanings, but in his own explanations of the romance as a genre, he indicates that style is one of the two major elements in the artistic creation of literature. Many critics ignore the possibility of a functional style in Hawthorne's works, agreeing with F. O. Matthiessen that the "stately flow of Hawthorne's style is

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7 *Hawthorne's Works*, III, 15.
8 *Hawthorne's Works*, V, 231.
9 *Hawthorne's Works*, VI, 15.
undisturbed by its thoughtful content." An examination, however, of the mechanical and technical devices which make up Hawthorne's stylistic technique reveals a surprising degree of functionality.

For convenience and for control, the analysis of Hawthorne's style presented here is limited to a selection of his short stories. The short story form will serve better to illustrate the thesis of this paper, that Hawthorne's style is used deliberately to create, in part, the neutral territory he desired, for, according to Jane Lundblad,

To the reader of today, the short stories of Hawthorne often seem to have retained more of their freshness than his longer works. . . . The very details that may in a short and artistic pastiche be of good effect, even because of their fantastic nature, will easily make his larger canvases appear rather affected and give them an antiquated stamp.

The shorter form has been chosen, additionally, because it requires of its author a certain discipline—superfluous elements of style must be abandoned so that the story can get on about its business. Hawthorne's short fiction, moreover, contains nearly all the stylistic techniques which he later used in his novels.

All references to individual tales are to The Standard Library Edition of The Complete Works of Hawthorne (1882) in

fifteen volumes, with Introductory Notes by George Parsons Lathrop. The first three volumes of this edition contain the tales and sketches of Hawthorne's only published collections—Twice-Told Tales (1837), Mosses from an Old Manse (1846), and The Snow Image (1851).

In attempting "to connect a by-gone time with the very present," Hawthorne had available to him the English language and the established literary devices for its arrangement, such as alliteration, assonance, varied sentence constructions, figurative expressions, and point of view, among others. The study of his stylistic technique, therefore, can be divided into the following areas of concentration: diction, syntax, fictional devices for preparation of the "neutral territory," and imagery and symbolism.

Chapter II of this work deals with an examination of the author's diction and his use of words to aid in the creation of "Faery Land." First, the nature of the words themselves is examined--their origins, their relative abstractness and concreteness, and their level (e. g., literary, poetic, colloquial, archaic). Next, attention is directed to what Hawthorne required of his language beyond intellectual communication. Of particular help in demonstrating the nature of Hawthorne's diction is Randall Stewart's Introduction to The American Notebooks of Hawthorne.\(^{12}\) Stewart's study of

the author's adaptations of notebook materials indicates Hawthorne's conscious use of language. An article which has been of value to this study is that by Robert Eugene Gross, "Hawthorne's First Novel: The Future of a Style." Although Gross concentrates on the young artist's first published work, he points out that it exemplifies techniques which are observable in Hawthorne's later fiction. A useful examination of Hawthorne's diction is also made by Clark Griffith in "Substance and Shadow: Language and Meaning in The House of the Seven Gables." For this section of the present study, examples are drawn from a group of representative tales and sketches, selected from each of his three volumes of tales. Typical of Hawthorne's best sketches are "David Swan" and "The Devil in Manuscript." Representing the stories based on historical incidents are "The Gray Champion," "Edward Randolph's Portrait," and "The Maypole of Merry Mount."


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Drawing upon the same selection of stories, Chapter III contains a study of Hawthorne's sentence structure, or syntax, in relation to the "picturesque effect" the author creates. First Hawthorne's use of certain sentence patterns and poetic techniques is examined, in preparation for a more detailed study of technique in "The Maypole of Merry Mount" and "Ethan Brand" in the last half of the chapter. For the study of syntax, Hyatt H. Waggoner's *Hawthorne: A Critical Study* is especially useful in addition to Randall Stewart's Introduction and Robert Gross's article previously referred to.

Chapter IV deals with the devices Hawthorne uses to introduce and to maintain the imaginative "poetic and fairy precinct" of the tales. Those which serve to establish Hawthorne as story-teller--the mechanical introductions, prefaces, and fairy-tale openings--are examined as stylistic techniques in his fiction. In *Nathaniel Hawthorne*, Terence Martin provides a sound basis for the study of such devices. Hawthorne's ability to sustain the story-teller tone through point of view and his role as intrusive author are studied in the second half of Chapter IV. The more general nature of this section requires that illustrations be drawn from almost all Hawthorne's short fiction.

Chapter V examines Hawthorne's use of imagery in figurative expression and nascent symbols as a means of

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uniting reality with the imaginary world of his tales. Supplying the basis for the chapter's analogy of Hawthorne's style to the Gothic is Maurice Charney's "Hawthorne and the Gothic Style." Although a detailed study is made of Hawthorne's use of symbolic suggestion in the opening of "Rappaccini's Daughter," several other tales furnish examples.

Other than Gross's article on the style of Fanshawe, there are few definitive critical works devoted exclusively to an analysis of Hawthorne's writing technique. F. O. Matthiessen comments briefly on the technical aspect of Hawthorne's fiction in his The American Renaissance. Although he asserts that Hawthorne's style is primarily rhetorical, Matthiessen does suggest that Hawthorne knew there could "be no authentic style unless it has been created by a meaning, by a close response to the complexity of existence." His final analysis, however, is that Hawthorne's early style was marked by simple, surface skill, and that later it was "bound to content."

Another secondary source more useful to a study of Hawthorne's technique is Leland Schubert's Hawthorne the Artist: Fine Art Devices in Fiction. Although the author

17 Matthiessen, p. 207.
18 Ibid., p. 190.
19 Ibid., pp. 203-204.
stresses that his is not a work on Hawthorne's style, he does discuss stylistic techniques, at least obliquely, in portions of the book. In particular, the chapter on "Color, Light-and-Shade, Sound" discusses Hawthorne's skill in creating pictures through prose, a process which involves the romanticist's choice and arrangement of words.

Q. D. Leavis is impressed by the poetic techniques evident in Hawthorne's fiction. In "Hawthorne as Poet," Leavis notes particularly Hawthorne's poetic use of language, calling it "directly evocative." She asserts also that Hawthorne's characteristic is to communicate his meanings as poet through imagery rather than to state them flatly through exposition. Hawthorne himself recognized the two elements necessary to the creation of romances, their "fashion" and their "material." This paper attempts to examine and to illustrate the former.


The present study of Hawthorne's diction is divided into two parts: First, an examination is made of the nature of the words themselves. Second, attention is directed to the functions Hawthorne evidently requires his words to perform other than intellectual communication.

Upon examination, Hawthorne's diction is seen to be chiefly comprised of words which lend themselves to the conveyance of abstractions instead of concrete realities; in short, it is Latinate, abstract, and literary. The abstract quality of his language is due partly to the frequence of borrowed words in his short fiction and partly to the general rather than specific nature of the Old English-based words he chooses. His penchant for elevated expression leads him to select poetic and archaic-sounding words, although he occasionally uses an outright archaism when the mood of the story or the euphony of the prose demands it. He prefers a literary level of expression, also, although he employs language on the colloquial level in some dialogue for contrast and heightened effects.

Hawthorne selects his words deliberately to achieve emotional as well as intellectual communication. Depending heavily on word-connotations to evoke certain emotional
responses from the reader, thereby giving added dimension to the object, character, or event described, he elicits more emotional responses with the euphony of his language. Alliteration and assonance, for instance, are frequently functional; that is, their sound-clusters often serve to intensify the meaning of a passage. More often, however, Hawthorne's use of these devices seems to be instinctive rather than deliberate. Such random clusters of alliterative or assonantal words, though they may not always intensify meaning, contribute to the unity and texture of the passage in which they appear.

Hawthorne urges ideas upon his reader by way of his Latinate and abstract diction. The stately flow of his language aids in maintaining a contemplative pace in the narratives. The richly connotative words, together with the many functional euphonic passages, elicit emotional responses in the reader which greatly enrich Hawthorne's ideas.

Several scholars remark the Latinity of Hawthorne's language. In his introduction to The American Notebooks, Randall Stewart illustrates Hawthorne's propensity for using "borrowed" words.¹ He lists, for example, some of the changes in diction which Hawthorne made in reworking a descriptive entry for inclusion in a tale or sketch: Old dog in the

¹The term borrowed words is used in its standard etymological sense to denote those English words which were derived from other languages.
notebook became venerable quadruped in the tale. Small became diminutive; great became vast; good became beneficent; and loud became obstreperous. Stewart ascribes this intentional use of Latinate words to Hawthorne's proficiency in the Latin classics while at Bowdoin. Robert Gross comments on the extent of borrowed words in Hawthorne's vocabulary, also, asserting that this characteristic is evident in Fanshawe, the young author's first published work. Gross remarks that the novel wears

... the style of a recent undergraduate who has studied under a curriculum which regularly required translations into Latin prose during three of his four college years, and who has mastered the ideals, if not always the grace, of English Augustan rhetoric.

Although Gross concentrates only on Fanshawe (1828), a study of the diction used in "Drowne's Wooden Image" (1850) supports the critic's claim that Latinity is a mark of Hawthorne's later style, too. The following passage is brief but certainly typical:

The face was still imperfect; but gradually, by a magic touch, intelligence and sensibility brightened through the features, with all the effect of light gleaming forth from within the solid oak. The face became alive. It was a beautiful, though not precisely regular and somewhat haughty aspect, but with a certain

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3Ibid.

piquancy about the eyes and mouth, which, of all expressions, would have seemed the most impossible to throw over a wooden countenance. And now, so far as carving went, this wonderful production was complete. 5

The italicized words are those which carry the burden of meaning, and a tabulation of their origins, based on the New English Dictionary, reveals that 61 per cent are borrowed words, 39 per cent are native words. Such a percentage is not surprising, for borrowed words supply most of the meaning in any English sentence. 6 When all the words in the passage are tabulated, however, the percentages are reversed: 72 per cent native words and 28 per cent borrowed. These figures nevertheless indicate a high percentage of borrowed words. 7

By comparison, Hawthorne's earliest favorite, 8 Samuel Johnson, had a "notoriously Latinized vocabulary," 9 according to Stuart Robertson and Frederick Cassidy. Johnson also had percentages of 72 per cent native and 28 per cent borrowed words in his prose. 10

Perhaps of significance equal to that of the relatively high percentage of foreign words in this passage is the

5Hawthorne's Works, II, 354; italics mine.


7In contrast, the King James Bible has 94 per cent native, 6 per cent borrowed, and in Shakespeare, the proportion is 90 per cent to 10 per cent. Ibid., p. 174.

8Gross, p. 60. 9Robertson, p. 174.

10Ibid.
selection of Old English words Hawthorne has made. Most of the Anglo-Saxon words in this representative quotation are empty function words or forms of the verb to be, but the italicized native words are forced to share the load of meaning with the foreign ones. Of the two Old English verbs in the quotation, brightened is used in its intransitive meaning, but it nonetheless conveys the idea of activity. It is an eye-appealing word which implies former darkness as it describes the coming of light; therefore, it is strengthened by its ability to impart two ideas at once. Became is a more fortunate choice than was in its context because the former word indicates a gradual action and does not offer the static description that the latter would. Four of the Anglo-Saxon words are simple nouns: light, eyes, mouth, and oak. And there are three simple adjectives: wooden, wonderful, and alive. The remaining words of Old English origin are verbals, always strong because of the idea of activity which still clings to them. Carving is used as a noun, but it denotes the sculptor's creativity as well as his creation. To throw over and gleaming forth are not only modifiers containing the idea of action but are also used figuratively. Their meaning load is three-fold. Hawthorne does not, therefore, choose Old English words simply for their concreteness.

11 All of Hawthorne's foreign words are of Latin origin directly or of Latin through French.
or for their familiar quality; he requires that they supply as many ideas as he can wring from them.

Concomitant with the high percentage of borrowed words in Hawthorne's diction is the abstract language. Most critics agree that Hawthorne is more concerned with examining an idea in his stories than with presenting a specific action for its own sake, and abstract terms convey more ideas than do concrete ones. Robert Gross remarks that Hawthorne's proclivity for "abstract language frees the subject matter from the limitations of the particular, making it available as a representative of a general, conceptual category . . . ."12 Hyatt Waggoner merely notes Hawthorne's preference for abstract or general words rather than concrete or specific ones.13 Randall Stewart catalogs only a few instances in which Hawthorne changed a general term in the notebook to a more specific, "and therefore more effective," one in the tale.14

Robertson and Cassidy assert that the style which relies on abstract words "may tend toward obscurity or an inflated emptiness of content,"15 and it is a lesser form of this ailment that W. C. Brownell diagnoses in Hawthorne. Brownell claims that Hawthorne's indolence caused him to neglect

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12Gross, p. 61.
14Stewart, p. xli.
15Robertson, p. 179.
emotion-charged language. But P. O. Matthiessen lays the blame on the language itself. He agrees with W. B. Yeats that when language has been the instrument of controversy it becomes abstract. Hawthorne's American English came to him from long use in theology and politics, not from use in literature, Matthiessen asserts.

The following passage from the sketch "David Swan" demonstrates the relative scarcity of specific terms in Hawthorne's fiction:

He had slept only a few moments when a brown carriage, drawn by a handsome pair of horses, bowled easily along, and was brought to a standstill nearly in front of David's resting-place. A linchpin had fallen out, and permitted one of the wheels to slide off. The damage was slight, and occasioned merely a momentary alarm to an elderly merchant and his wife, who were returning to Boston in the carriage.

Brown, pair, linchpin, and Boston are the only truly concrete words in the quotation. Carriage, horses, merchant, and wife are at least general terms. But nearly is more typical of Hawthorne's peculiar specificity.

For comparison, a descriptive passage from "The Birthmark" indicates the abstraction and generality common to most of Hawthorne's words:

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18 Hawthorne's Works, I, 212-213.
When Georgiana recovered consciousness she found herself breathing an atmosphere of penetrating fragrance, the gentle potency of which had recalled her from her deathlike faintness. The scene around her looked like enchantment. . . . The walls were hung with gorgeous curtains, which imparted the combination of grandeur and grace that no other species of adornment can achieve . . . .19

Even when a word such as curtains approaches concreteness, Hawthorne qualifies it with an abstract modifier, gorgeous. Narrative passages in the same story are not without abstractions:

On the window seat there stood a geranium diseased with yellow blotches, which had overspread all its leaves. Aylmer poured a small quantity of the liquid upon the soil in which it grew. In a little time, when the roots of the plant had taken up the moisture, the unsightly blotches began to be extinguished in a living verdure.20

Amid so many abstract words, concrete terms are doubly emphasized. In the same tale, Hawthorne writes, "Her husband tenderly kissed her cheek—her right cheek—not that which bore the impress of the crimson hand."21

Not only do Hawthorne's tales indicate a preference for Latinate and abstract expression, but they also exhibit a preference for "literary" diction.22 Stewart notes that Hawthorne consistently made his diction more elegant when reworking notebook materials for publication. He cites examples such as green attire for leaves, watery waste for flood, and shed tears for cry. In all cases, a more dignified

19 Ibid., II, 55.  
20 Ibid., II, 66.  
21 Ibid., II, 53; italics mine.  
22 Refers to the elevated, ornamental diction as opposed to the plain.
expression replaces a plain, common word. George Parsons Lathrop heralds Hawthorne's "dignity and roundness of diction which is one of the old-fashioned merits in English writing . . . ." Such dignity slows Hawthorne's prose to the contemplative, meditative pace he evidently preferred. The following narrative passage from "Edward Randolph's Portrait" illustrates the meditative quality which permeates the action of his tales:

Alice and her cousin more slowly followed, whispering together, and once pausing to glance back at the mysterious picture. The Captain of Castle William fancied that the girl's air and mien were such as might have belonged to one of those spirits of fable--fairies, or creatures of a more antique mythology--who sometimes meddled in their agency with mortal affairs, half in caprice, yet with a sensibility to human weal or woe. As he held the door for her to pass, Alice beckoned to the picture and smiled.

Hawthorne could have chosen shorter, more common words for this passage, words which would have quickened the pace of the narrative, such as the following:

thought for fancied
manner for air and mien
fairies for spirits of fable
an older for a more antique
meddled in for mingled their agency with
man's for mortal
whim for caprice

23 Stewart, pp. xli-xlii.
24 George Parsons Lathrop, A Study of Hawthorne (Boston, 1876), p. 300.
awareness of for sensibility to joys or sorrows for weal or woe

Such alterations would hasten the action, but they would not serve Hawthorne’s purpose. He is not concerned with removing his characters from the room; he is concerned with establishing a mysterious relationship between Alice and the portrait.

Hawthorne’s literary diction affects the pace not only of the narrative passages but of descriptions, also. The following quotation reveals what F. O. Matthiessen calls Hawthorne’s “relish for the rounded period, and for the heightened dignity that the eighteenth century had believed must characterize serious art”:

... The fourth [man] whom we shall notice had no name that his companions knew of, and was chiefly distinguished by a sneer that always contorted his thin visage, and by a prodigious pair of spectacles, which were supposed to deform and discolor the whole face of nature, to this gentlemen’s perception.

Such a passage, for instance, contains diction typical of Hawthorne. Visage and prodigious were particular favorites, and it is characteristic of him to say was distinguished by instead of wore and the whole face of nature instead of nature.

Although Hawthorne held himself to proper literary diction in description and narration, he took more freedom

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26 Mingled their agency with and more antique are probably the least effective of Hawthorne’s choices here; the more common alternatives suggested for the other phrases are not so effective in their contexts.

27 Matthiessen, p. 213.

when choosing words for dialogue. Matthiessen contends that, although Hawthorne caught and recorded conversational idioms in his notebooks, he used them in his published work only for a few low comedy characters. "Everyone else," writes Matthiessen, "is decorous in speech." This generalization seems true for most of the tales; conversations between Aylmer and Georgiana in "The Birthmark" certainly support it:

"Drink, then, thou lofty creature!" exclaimed Aylmer, with fervid admiration. "There is no taint of imperfection on thy spirit. Thy sensible frame, too, shall soon be all perfect . . . ."

"It is grateful," said she with a placid smile. "Methinks it is like water from a heavenly fountain; for it contains I know not what of unobtrusive flavor and deliciousness . . . ." Such speeches are uncommonly literary, hardly a discourse one would expect between husband and wife.

Young Goodman Brown and his Faith are more natural in their marital roles because their speech is more colloquial:

"Then God bless you!" said Faith, with the pink ribbons; "and may you find all well when you come back."

"Amen!" cried Goodman Brown. "Say thy prayers, dear Faith, and go to bed at dusk, and no harm will come to thee."

The language of all the dialogue in "Young Goodman Brown" is surprisingly colloquial, although it never completely abandons the decorum which Matthiessen believes is its chief characteristic. Goody Cloyse, as a comedy character, speaks in a natural cackle:

29Matthiessen, pp. 211-212.

30Hawthorne's Works, II, 66.  
31Ibid., II, 89.
"Ah forsooth, and is it your worship indeed?" cried the good dame. "Yea, truly is it, and in the very image of my old gossip, Goodman Brown, the grandfather of the silly fellow that now is. But—would your worship believe it?—my broomstick hath strangely disappeared, stolen, as I suspect, by that unhanged witch, Goody Cory, and that, too, when I was all anointed with the juice of smallage, and cinquefoil, and wolf's bane."

"Ah, your worship knows the recipe," cried the old lady, cackling aloud. "So, as I was saying, being all ready for the meeting, and no horse to ride on, I made up my mind to foot it; for they tell me there is a nice young man to be taken into communion to-night . . . ." 32

The devil himself lapses into colloquialisms:

"Well said, Goodman Brown! I have been as well acquainted with your family as with ever a one among the Puritans; and that's no trifle to say . . . ." 33

Goodman Brown describes himself as a simple husbandman, and his speech adds to the self-characterization:

"We are a people of prayer, and good works to boot, and abide no such wickedness." 34

"But with your leave friend, I shall take a cut through the woods until we have left this Christian woman behind." 35

"Faith kept me back awhile . . . ." 36

"Friend," said he stubbornly, "my mind is made up. Not another step will I budge on this errand. What if a wretched old woman do choose to go to the devil when I thought she was going to heaven; is that any reason why I should quit my dear Faith and go after her?" 37

Hawthorne achieves the natural dialogue in "Young Goodman Brown" entirely by the judicious use of colloquialisms.

32 Ibid., II, 94-95. 33 Ibid., II, 92.
34 Ibid. 34 Ibid., II, 94.
36 Ibid., II, 91. 37 Ibid., II, 95-96.
He allows his "simple husbandman" to say, "Faith kept me back," "take a cut through the woods," "not another step will I budge," and "good works to boot," but Hawthorne cannot allow outright solecisms. He carefully uses the subjunctive when Goodman Brown asks, "What if a wretched old woman do choose to go to the devil . . . ?" Although Brown's speech is always correct and is never coarse, its naturalness makes Brown more human and renders the content of the tale more terrible because more immediate to the reader.

Hawthorne's diction does not contain an abundance of archaisms, but when the author does choose an archaic word, he uses it for a specific purpose just as he does colloquialisms. More often than not his archaic-sounding words are merely those which have been dropped from common speech and have been relegated to the level of literary or poetic diction. According to Robertson and Cassidy, the use of archaic words is one characteristic of nineteenth-century style, Sir Walter Scott's "delight in reviving obsolete words" serving as their example.\(^{38}\) Q. D. Leavis declares that when Hawthorne is "trying for an archaic diction he can be seen to write no language, though he is never un plausible \(^{39}\) like Scott."\(^{39}\) The plausibility of Hawthorne's diction is due to his

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\(^{38}\) Robertson, p. 330.

purposeful use of words which are not so archaic as they are only poetic. In general, Hawthorne uses them to evoke an atmosphere of the past and to contribute to the euphony of his prose.

In the historical tales, especially, Hawthorne employs archaic-sounding words to maintain the feeling of time past for his reader. The gray champion commands, "Back, thou wast a Governor, back! With this night thy power is ended--tomorrow, the prison!--back, lest I foretell the scaffold!" Although Hawthorne consistently uses the poetic pronouns to suggest the past, he chooses other archaic-sounding expressions to serve the same function, such as the ones in these passages from "The Great Carbuncle":

"... Methinks, now, it were not amiss that each of us declare what he proposes to do with the Great Carbuncle, provided he have the good hap to clutch it."

"Having found it, I shall bear it to a certain cavern that I wot of . . . ." 

"For myself, hiding the jewel under my cloak, I shall hie me back to my attic chamber in one of the darksome alleys of London."

"Wherefore have all other adventurers sought the prize in vain but that I might win it . . . ?"

In a few instances, Hawthorne uses an archaic word to contribute to the euphony of his prose. The author of "The

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42Ibid. 43Ibid., I, 180. 44Ibid., I, 181; italics mine.
Maypole of Merry Mount" addresses the wild merrymakers as "green men" and "glee maidens." The words, green men, which are described by the NED as obsolete, indicate men dressed to resemble wild creatures in order to take part in masques or outdoor shows. Glee-maidens (hyphenated in the NED) denotes maidens who sing special part-songs. In this case, the green men and the glee maidens provide an alliterative balance, and the meanings of the words used to designate them fit the description of the festivities precisely, although obsoletely. The effect produced in "The Hollow of the Three Hills" depends on its author's skillful use of sounds. The climactic paragraph is unified by the sound of a funeral bell; an o sound permeates the paragraph in such words as golden, overspread, stole, boding, dolefully, and woe. Hawthorne therefore chooses the archaic knolling instead of the more usual knelling to describe the bell's ringing.

Of the words singled out for attention in the above passages, only four are labeled by the NED as "archaic." They are hap, wot, knolling, and green men. The others are termed "literary" or "poetic." Two correlatives which Hawthorne seems to be particularly fond of using are also described as "now chiefly literary." They are whither and

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45 Ibid., I, 73.
47 Ibid.
thither, and whence and thence. Hawthorne may not be merely following a stylistic fad, then, but only consistently maintaining the literary level of his language.

Thus Hawthorne's diction reveals his liking for Latinity, abstractness, and a literary level of expression. In addition, his choice of language demonstrates that Hawthorne intended much more than intellectual communication. By consistently choosing words which are rich in connotation and suggestion, he elicits from his reader emotional responses which enrich the meaning of the tales. By skillfully using devices which create euphony, Hawthorne re-echoes his ideas in the sound of his language.

Leland Schubert terms Hawthorne an impressionist. Indeed, because Hawthorne relies often upon the connotation of his words to give the impression of a scene instead of its faithful reproduction, the appellation is justified. In "The Maypole of Merry Mount," the author uses words to suggest rather than to name specific colors. As in the following passage, the reader is allowed to choose his own color-images, but Hawthorne controls the connotative value of the words so that the reader gradually chooses different colors, all of which contribute to Hawthorne's meaning:

One was a youth in glistening apparel, with a scarf of rainbow pattern crosswise on his breast. His right hand

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held a gilded staff, . . . and his left grasped the slender fingers of a fair maiden, not less gayly decorated than himself. Bright roses glowed in contrast with the dark and glossy curls of each, and were scattered round their feet, or had sprung up spontaneously there. Behind this lightsome couple, so close to the May-pole that its boughs shaded his jovial face, stood the figure of an English priest, canonically dressed, yet decked with flowers, in heathen fashion, and wearing a chaplet of the native vine leaves. By the riot of his rolling eye, and the pagan decorations of his holy garb, he seemed the wildest monster there . . .

The first words of the passage suggest bright colors, and with them, youth, sunlight, and joy: glistening, rainbow pattern, gilded, slender fingers, fair, bright roses glowed, glossy, lightsome, and jovial. But insinuated into the middle of the paragraph, and dominating the last half, are words with ominous, more serious connotations: dark, priest, canonically, heathen, riot, pagan, holy garb, and wildest. These are, after all, only omens; the scene is still one of merriment. But Hawthorne has suggested an impurity in the celebration and has foreshadowed the ultimate destruction of the merry-makers.

A typical use of connotation to suggest color is found in "Edward Randolph's Portrait":

Within the antique frame, which so recently had inclosed a sable waste of canvas, now appeared a visible picture, still dark, indeed, in its hues and shadings, but thrown forward in strong relief. It was a half-length figure of a gentleman in a rich but very old-fashioned dress of embroidered velvet . . .

Antique suggests a dull gold; rich . . . dress suggests deep

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50. Ibid., I, 303.
purple, red, or blue; embroidered velvet, dark and heavy maroon, green, or brown. Schubert applauds Hawthorne's ability to build colorful scenes without the use of color adjectives. He notes that the reader is required to associate qualities other than color with the object being described in this way.\textsuperscript{51}

The most striking and sustained use of connotative diction is found in "The Hollow of the Three Hills," a tale in which three "visions" are granted a young woman by a witch. Since the woman's face is buried in the witch's skirts, the "visions" must be presented to her through sounds:

\begin{quote}
\ldots at length the petition ended, and the conversation of an aged man, and of a woman broken and decayed like himself, became distinctly audible to the lady as she knelt. But those strangers appeared not to stand in the hollow depth between the three hills. Their voices were encompassed and reechoed by the walls of a chamber, the windows of which were rattling in the breeze; the regular vibration of a clock, the crackling of a fire, and the tinkling of the embers as they fell among the ashes, rendered the scene almost as vivid as if painted to the eye \ldots. They spoke of a daughter \ldots. They alluded also to other and more recent woe, but in the midst of their talk their voices seemed to melt into the sound of the wind sweeping mournfully among the autumn leaves; and when the lady lifted her eyes, there she was kneeling in the hollow between the three hills.\textsuperscript{52}
\end{quote}

The intellectual content and the specificity of the sound words make the vision seem real. Their emotional content evokes a feeling of horror. The "crackling" and "tinkling"

\textsuperscript{51}Schubert, p. 99.

\textsuperscript{52}Hawthorne's Works, I, 230-231.
of the fire make the scene more melancholy because the words suggest happiness and contentment. The "rattling" of the windows, the "reëchoed" voices, and the "vibrations" of the clock suggest emptiness and loneliness. In his critical analysis of the story, Clinton S. Burhans reports that Hawthorne's ability to convey meaning by using language designed to stimulate an emotional reaction contributes to the unity of the story.\(^5\)

Hawthorne also chooses his words with an ear to their melodic effect. He indulges in bursts of alliteration and assonance which are often functional, but not consistently so. It is seldom possible to determine whether the two devices, when used functionally, are employed consciously or not. A few examples of the happy use of such sound devices, however, serve to illustrate their ability to intensify the meaning of passages in which they appear.

Functional alliteration, for instance, may be observed in a description of a foul pool of water in "The Hollow of the Three Hills":

Such scenes as this . . . were once the resort of the Power of Evil and his plighted subjects; and here . . . they were said to stand round the mantling pool, disturbing its putrid waters in the performance of an impious baptismal rite.\(^6\)


\(^6\)Hawthorne's *Works*, I, 228; italics mine.
The repeated pronunciation of the bi-labial b's and p's intensifies the revulsion the reader is supposed to feel. After the formation of these two letters, sound explodes from the reader's lips, causing him to spit out the words, as it were. An exaggerated pronunciation of them requires the reader to wrinkle his nose in an expression of repugnance. Although the normal, silent reading will not create this wrinkling of the nose, the suggestion of it is, nevertheless, there.

Another fortunate use of alliteration occurs in "The Birthmark." The somnolent s accentuates the author's musings on sleep; when he breaks from the dream world, Hawthorne employs a more active f:

The mind is in a sad state when sleep, the all-involving, cannot confine her spectres within the dim region of her sway, but suffers them to break forth, affrighting this actual life with secrets that perchance belong to a deeper one.55

Alliterative w's and s's intensify the sound of whispering in "Young Goodman Brown": "... so indistinct were the sounds, he doubted whether he had heard aught but the murmur of the old forest, whispering without a mind."56

Hawthorne uses alliteration also to serve the technical function of creating balanced phrases such as the following:


grizzly saints . . . gay sinners
vast and visible
prelacy and persecution
sworn triflers . . . sober truths.57

Functional assonance is not so readily noticed in Hawthorne's prose. In "The Maypole of Merry Mount," he writes, "... so in the tie that united them, were inter-twined all the purest and best of their early joys."58 Here the vowel i serves to "unites" the words and the meaning of the sentence. And already noticed is the pervading o sound which is functional to the passage in "The Hollow of the Three Hills."

More often, alliteration and assonance appear in random clusters which contribute nothing to the meaning but aid the rhythmic flow of the passages. The following sentence from "The Great Carbuncle" illustrates Hawthorne's more typical use of alliteration:

. . . Her name was Hannah, and her husband's Matthew; two homely names, yet well enough adapted to the simple pair, who seemed strangely out of place among the whimsical fraternity whose wits had been set agog by the Great Carbuncle.59

The alliterative h, s, p, and w serve no intensifying function in this passage; however, the sounds overlap, creating an


58 Hawthorne's Works, I, 84; italics mine.

59 Ibid., I, 176.
artificial unity within the lengthy sentence. Since such clusters of alliteration and assonance do not noticeably intensify the meaning, and since they appear sporadically throughout his fiction, one must assume that Hawthorne uses this unifying device unconsciously rather than deliberately. The fact that his long, involved sentences gain unity through these sound devices reveals that even the euphony of Hawthorne's fiction does double duty.

All features of Hawthorne's diction work together to stimulate the reader's intellectual and emotional involvement in the artist's "fancy pictures." Hawthorne relies more often on the idea-filled borrowed word to carry his thought, apparently choosing words of Old English origin only when they contain multiple meanings. Neither does Hawthorne attempt a faithful reproduction of reality through the use of concrete language; rather, as Leland Schubert observes after a study of the opening paragraph of "The Minister's Black Veil,"

We can safely say that the picture which we see is not on the page but in our minds. It has, however, been brought into being, or as we say, stimulated, by what is on the page.60

Rather than recreate objective reality for his readers, Hawthorne suggests a subjective interpretation of reality through abstract language. The literary level of Hawthorne's diction further elicits thoughtful meditation from the reader.

60 Schubert, p. 8.
producing pauses in the action, slowing the narrative to a contemplative pace.

In addition to stimulating the reader's intellectual faculties with his Latinate, abstract, and literary diction, Hawthorne evokes emotional responses with connotative and euphonic words. Instead of specific, limiting descriptive terms, Hawthorne chooses richly connotative words, suggesting a definite description as he calls for the reader's emotional involvement in the narrative. Hawthorne's euphony of language appeals not only to the intellect, by literally re-echoing the meaning of a passage, but also to the emotions, thereby lending unity through the sound of the words.

Had Hawthorne been more concerned with specificity and concreteness in word-choice, his imaginative "fairy precincts" would fade in the bright light of such reality; therefore, he evidently chose his words carefully to transfer the fairy land of romance to his reader's consciousness by implication and suggestion without imposing his own notion of what that land should be.

61Literally is used in the sense given by the NED as definition one: "of or pertaining to letters of the alphabet . . . ."
CHAPTER III

SYNTAX

Describing his attempts to convert The Scarlet Letter into opera, Robert Mann writes that the words of opera are important solely to the composer and then only to suggest "the logic and pace of the text." And it is the "logic" and "pace" of Hawthorne's syntax which this chapter examines.

The structure of Hawthorne's sentences reveals the romancer's concern for the quality of things rather than the things themselves and for the effects of actions rather than the actions themselves. Referring to himself as a writer of "psychological romances," Hawthorne supports his self-evaluation by making evident in his tales the effects of such problems as sin and guilt on the human personality.

In "Ethan Brand," for example, Hawthorne does not show Brand's active commission of the Unpardonable Sin; he dispatches that activity in one summary paragraph. Instead the entire tale is concerned with the final effect of the sin on Brand. Hawthorne finds a variety of methods to emphasize effects within his sentences. Technical devices, such as


2Hawthorne's Works, III, 386.
periodic and inverted sentences, emphasis on nouns and adjectives, and the use of weak verbs, work together to create in Hawthorne's fiction an effect of deep brown study, not of vigorous action.

The pace of Hawthorne's syntax is decidedly poetic. Such rhythmic arrangement of sentences lends a meditative pace to the prose, providing the opportunity for the reader to examine the ideas presented there. The "musicality" of Hawthorne's work is due in part to his use of incremental repetition, alliteration, assonance, figurative language,\(^3\) and a lyric pattern of phrases.

There is also a rhythm of meaning in Hawthorne's fiction, a repetition of ideas at significant points in the narrative, which makes his syntax explicitly functional. "The Maypole of Merry Mount," in which Hawthorne contrasts among other things the colonists of Merry Mount with the Puritans, the natural state with the civilized, and light with darkness, is composed of balanced and often contrasted pairs of words and phrases. And in "Ethan Brand," based on the circular journey of Brand away from and back to the lime kiln, Hawthorne constructs sentences which are themselves circular in design.

Sentence structure is one of many elements in Hawthorne's fiction which indicate the romanticist's concern with effects.

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\(^3\)For discussion of alliteration and assonance, see Chapter II; for figurative language, Chapter IV.
For example, Leland Schubert believes that Hawthorne characterizes the people in his tales indirectly, by describing their "effect on other characters." That Hawthorne was capable of emphasizing effects in syntax as well as in content is one indication of his artistry.

One technique Hawthorne employs to obtain such emphasis is the use of periodic sentence structure. According to the editors of *A Handbook to Literature,*

The characteristic of a periodic sentence is that its construction is such as constantly to throw the mind forward to the idea which will complete the meaning. The periodic sentence is effective when it is desired to arouse interest and curiosity, to hold an idea in suspense before its final revelation is made.

They further define the device by saying that it is most often achieved by prefacing the main clause of a sentence with modifying phrases or with a dependent clause, or by using correlatives such as *either . . . or* and *not only . . . but also.* The most unnatural, and yet the simplest, form of this device is postponing the subject until the end of the sentence, placing the complement first.

Hyatt Waggoner notes Hawthorne's consistent use of the periodic sentence in combination with loose word order, by

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which he means inversion of subject and verb. Indeed, such rearrangements of normal sentence patterns are quite common in Hawthorne's fiction. From only two pages of "Young Goodman Brown," several variations of the pattern may be cited as examples:

Unfathomable to mere mortals is the lore of fiends.

... where now appeared a figure.

A rampant hag was she.\(^7\)

In the first quotation, for instance, the reader is startled by the adjective *unfathomable* because it is out of what he considers its usual place in the sentence. He is, moreover, eager to discover just what he, as one of the "mere mortals," is not able to fathom, and his anticipation of "the lore of fiends" places double emphasis on that phrase. An aura of mystery is created in the second quotation by the inverted word order, rather than the flat statement that would have been made had the order been normal. The last stresses "a rampant hag" by the placement of the phrase at the beginning of the sentence.

There are many more such constructions which control the reader's attention if one counts appositives as part of the postponed subject and disregards expletive subjects:

Scattered also among their pale-faced enemies were the Indian priests, or powwows, who had . . . .

\(^7\) *Hawthorne's Works*, II. 102-103.
Thither came also the slender form of a veiled female . . . .

This night it shall be granted you to know their secret deeds . . . .

It shall be yours to penetrate, in every bosom, the deep mystery of sin . . . .

As hope came into his heart, he trembled.

. . . and flashing forth, as it were, in a sheet of flame, the fiend worshippers were seen. 8

In all cases, Hawthorne has stressed the mystery and the horror of the story by placing the words which suggest those feelings in a stressed position: Indian priests, or powwows, veiled female, secret deeds, the deep mystery of sin, he trembled, fiend worshippers. By playing with word order in the same manner, Hawthorne makes the effect of the witch’s sabbath on Goodman Brown the most important element of the following sentence just as it is the most important element of the tale:

. . . A stern, a sad, a darkly meditative, a distrustful, if not a desperate man did he become from the night of that fearful dream. 9

The technical device here is one of simple inversion; Hawthorne stresses the results of the dream by placing those results first in the sentence.

Hawthorne finds other syntactical devices to lay emphasis on effects rather than causes within his sentences. He seems to stress nouns and modifiers instead of active verbs whenever

8Ibid., II, 101-104. 9Ibid., II, 106.
possible; Robert Gross notes this tendency in his first work, *Fanshawe*, commenting that such constructions place "emphasis on the quality of things rather than their activities."\(^{10}\) Gross laments that

> Although it can be beautifully cadenced and musical, such prose is static, and often stresses the texture of a sentence—the mode of expression and the play of meaning—at the expense of narrative movement and the representation of external reality. The form of the description takes precedence over the sensuous individuality of the matter described.\(^{11}\)

Gross later admits that Hawthorne uses the best possible syntax for "the handling of subject matter which itself calls for a meditative pause."\(^{12}\) Indeed, it is just such "play of meaning" which Hawthorne seems bent on creating in his sentences.

> Frequently, the romanticist uses the passive voice in order to place his nouns in a significant position, thereby emphasizing the effect of an action on the noun, rather than stressing the activity involved. Stewart inadvertently illustrates Hawthorne's conscious use of the passive voice when he cites the following journal excerpt: "There is a pervading blessing diffused over all the land." Stewart notes that in the published sketch, the sentence becomes, "A blessing is flung abroad and scattered far and wide over

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\(^{11}\) Ibid.

\(^{12}\) Ibid.
the earth . . . ." By placing a blessing at the beginning of the sentence, Hawthorne has directed attention to the noun which has been acted upon. Hawthorne seems unconcerned about the metaphysical problem of who or what actively accomplishes the flinging; to him, the fact that the blessing is there at all is worthy of contemplation.

"The Hollow of the Three Hills," a story concerned with effects, contains striking examples of such syntax: "As she knelt down, the border of her garment was dipped into the pool." Hawthorne could have easily made the clause active by omitting the was: the border of her garment dipped into the pool. Such an action would have seemed merely accidental. Its only excuse for remaining in the tale would be its contribution to the realism of the scene. Hawthorne's wary reader, however, noting the author's earlier suggestion that the pool is the site of fiendish baptismal rites, would be confused by a realistic detail involving the pool. Hawthorne obviously intends the sentence to indicate the young woman's baptism into the fraternity of evil. The sentence must be passive. There is no one in the scene to perform the baptism actively: the young woman would not have dipped her own skirts into the "putrid waters," and had the witch attempted to


14Hawthorne's Works, I, 230.
immerse them, the young woman, who is already frightened, would have bolted the eerie scene. To Hawthorne, the accomplished baptized state is important, so he once again ignores the problem of an actor by employing the passive voice.

In "Edward Randolph's Portrait," the romancer suggests that the blackened portrait may be a likeness of "the Evil One." A reliable account of the painting, writes Hawthorne, was "that its strong and terrible resemblance to the devil had been confirmed by several of the confessing wizards and witches, at their trial, in open court."\(^{15}\) To Hawthorne, the confirmed resemblance is of more importance than remote witches and wizards and their otherwise irrelevant confessions; therefore, he places the noun at the beginning of the clause, such a placement making the passive voice necessary.

Also in "Edward Randolph's Portrait," its author combines an elaborately executed periodic structure with the passive voice to create a mysterious effect:

Partly shrouded in the voluminous folds of one of the window curtains, which fell from the ceiling to the floor, was seen the white drapery of a lady's robe.\(^{16}\)

By reversing the word order of the sentence, Hawthorne stresses the modifier *shrouded* and arouses the reader's curiosity to know just what is thus obscured. He uses the periodic

\(^{15}\)Ibid., I, 295. \(^{16}\)Ibid., I, 300.
sentence arrangement to lend mystery to Alice Vane by means of her white dress. Through the verb *was seen*, instead of *was*, Hawthorne suggests the possibility of illusion. The passive voice is again necessary to Hawthorne's purpose, because it is the effect of mystery and evil omen that is important and not the viewers of that effect.

Hawthorne's frequent use of the passive voice should be of interest to those scholars who argue his ambiguous position regarding free-will or determinism. Especially in the context of a story like "The Hollow of the Three Hills," the passive voice implies a tendency toward determinism. In a passive construction, the activity of the verb affects the subject irrevocably; the absence of free choice is implicit. The apparent functionality of the passive voice in Hawthorne's fiction lends evident support to the contentions of those critics who find a dominant determinism in the romanticist's fictional position.

Hawthorne seems also to be fond of qualifying modifiers. Nouns seldom appear unadorned. In "The Birthmark," Hawthorne is faced with the task of contriving synonyms for the word *birthmark*. Only twice does he call it simply the *mark*, and six times (excluding the title) he refers to it openly as *the birthmark*. For the other instances, he concocts the following substitutions:

- this slightest possible defect
- this fairy sign manual
- this little hand
- mimic hand
mysterious hand
bloody hand
this little, little mark
fatal birthmark
dreadful hand
this horrible stigma

crimson hand
spectral hand
odious hand
terrible mark
crimson birthmark

The device of varying the adjective to provide synonyms is not only characteristic but also indicative of Hawthorne's apparent preference for qualified nouns.

The author's single-word modifiers do not usually delineate his nouns more sharply; instead, they contribute to the mood which Hawthorne associates with the noun he has chosen. For instance, he writes,


Good old Deacon Goodkin had arrived, and waited at the skirts of that venerable saint, his reverend pastor. But irreverently consorting with these grave, reputable, and pious people, these elders of the church, these chaste dames and dewy virgins, there were men of dissolute lives and women of spotted fame, wretches given over to all mean and filthy vice, and suspected even of horrid crimes.17

Dark-clad and old are the only two adjectives which limit their nouns specifically. But Hawthorne does not intend to increase his reader's perception; rather he uses abstract modifiers to intensify a concept. In the foregoing passage, not the nouns but the adjectives align themselves with the concepts of good and evil, the opposites which Hawthorne is contrasting.

17 Ibid., II, 101.
The author relies often on modifiers to achieve balance in passages:

... and still the chorus of the desert swelled between like the deepest tone of a mighty organ; and with the final peal of that dreadful anthem there came a sound, as if the roaring wind, the rushing streams, the howling beasts, and every other voice of the unconcerted wilderness were mingling and according with the voice of guilty man in homage to the prince of all. 18

Hawthorne uses strong, active verbs frequently, but they generally go unnoticed because of their elaborate contexts and because Hawthorne's other verbs usually throw more stress on nouns and modifiers. The use of to be forms, coupled often with an expletive subject, places emphasis on the predicate nominative or predicate adjective:

On the whole, there was something so airy and yet so real in the figure . . . .
He was again the mechanical carver . . . .
All elements are but one pervading flame!
The street was now all alive with footsteps . . . .
For aught Georgiana knew, it might be a pavilion among the clouds. 19

Hawthorne's prose, however, is not without vigorous, active verbs, but since he either buries them in the middle of weighty sentences or qualifies them immediately with adverbs, he evidently distrusts their ability to heighten

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18 Ibid., II, 102.
his effects. The following verbs evoke images, but they are almost lost in their context:

... especially the man with spectacles, who had sneered at all the company in turn, now twisted his visage into such an expression of ill-natured mirth, that Matthew asked him, rather peevishly, what he himself meant to do with the Great Carbuncle.20

The first verb, had sneered, is contained in a modifying clause. The verb of the main clause, twisted, imparts activity to the sentence, but the assonant i links it to visage, into, and ill-natured so that it seems to be supported by the other words. Although in the following passage Hawthorne does use active verbs, he seems to suspect their ability to convey his thought, for he supplies them with qualifying modifiers to assure no mistake in their meaning:

The spring murmured drowsily beside him; the branches waved dreamily across the blue sky overhead . . . .21

Up mounted David, and bowled away merrily towards Boston . . . .22

"Noblest, dearest, tenderest wife," cried Aylmer rapturously.23

The verse died heavily away . . . .24

21 "David Swan," Hawthorne's Works, I, 212.
22 Ibid., p. 218.
On occasion, Hawthorne allows his verbs to stand alone, and the reader finds his prose the better for it.

"—destruction roars through my dark forests, while the lakes boil up . . . .

". . . years and years ago, I groped into your hearts . . . ."

No sooner had he spoken than Alice Vane glided from her station, and . . . snatched away the sable curtain that concealed the portrait.

. . . till now it gloomed forth again and threw its evil omen over the present hour.25

By far, Hawthorne's favorite method is to suggest a prior action rather than to describe the action as it occurs. To imply both the activity and its end result, Hawthorne uses participial modifiers. Instances of the method are numerous:

On the other side was Bullivant, scattering jests and mockery as he rode along.

He was a bright-eyed man, but wofully pined away . . . .

Hannah and I, being wedded the last week . . . .

Next, they came to masses and fragments of naked rock, heaped confusedly together, like a cairn reared by giants in memory of a giant chief.

. . . a pretty young girl came along, with a tripping pace.26


The most noticeable feature of Hawthorne's syntax is the "fulness of expression which," as Randall Stewart asserts, "borders on the pleonastic." Stewart notes that Hawthorne recast all his journal sentences when transferring them to stories and that, in addition, he habitually expanded them. Hawthorne's additions, according to Stewart, are parenthetical explanations, adjectives, synonyms, and comparisons and contrasts. Hawthorne obtains the fulness of expression through redundant combinations of words, such as unquiet crisis, gaseous odors, void blackness, patriarchal fathers, venerable antiquity, returning recollection. In many cases, the parenthetical or explanatory material that Hawthorne inserts into a sentence is so long that the author finds he must repeat a phrase to focus the reader's attention once again on the narrative. Two instances occur near the beginning of "Drowne's Wooden Image":

"... Here,"—pointing to a staring, half-length figure in a white wig and scarlet coat,—"here is an excellent model. . . . ."

From his earliest boyhood he had exhibited a knack—for it would be too proud a word to call it genius—a knack, therefore, for the imitation of the human figure. . . . .

27 Stewart, p. xxxviii.
28 Ibid., p. xxvii.
Such syntactical habits as periodic and inverted sentence structure, accentuation of nouns and modifiers with the resultant de-emphasis of verbs, and redundancy in adjectives and nouns all combine to stress the "quality of things rather than their activities." Even the lyric pace of Hawthorne's prose adds to its contemplative nature.

Q. D. Leavis writes that Hawthorne has "wonderful control of local and total rhythm." Waggoner agrees, saying that Hawthorne's work "is completely made, as the poet, the maker, makes his poems." According to Read, Hawthorne exhibits "a careful, conscious use of words, a sense of rhythm." "The immense musicality of Hawthorne's prose" impressed Robert Mann. But Robert Gross dissents, saying that, in Fanshawe especially, Hawthorne's syntax is "overly-cadenced."

One technique in the creation of rhythmical prose is the repetition of words and phrases. Though the present study has already illustrated Hawthorne's proclivity for pleonastic repetitions within sentences, they were not established as rhythmic patterns. Leland Schubert defines rhythm as the more or less regular repetition of motifs. He suggests that

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32 Waggoner, p. 105.
34 Mann, p. 345. 35 Gross, p. 61. 36 Schubert, p. 66.
Beatrice's poisonous breath in "Rappaccini's Daughter" is a motif, and he notes the appearance of the words breath and breathe twenty-five times in the tale. He apologizes for the apparent triviality of such a word-count:

This matter would hardly be worth mentioning if it were an isolated example. But there are many such rhythms in Hawthorne.

Schubert also mentions a longer example in "Feathertop": "Dickon, a coal for my pipe." This command is reiterated, he says, until the reader is conditioned to expect it at certain points in the story.

Robert Mann, who remarks the "musicality of Hawthorne's prose," does so after intensive study of the dialogue in The Scarlet Letter. During his adaptation of that romance to opera, Mann converted the conversations to free verse and describes his findings in "Afterthoughts on Opera and The Scarlet Letter." Hawthorne uses character names rhythmically in dialogue, but more important, according to Mann, the same rhythmic placement of names is repeated when a similar emotion is being expressed. He suggests that when the name of the person being addressed occurs at the opening of a bit of dialogue, Hawthorne is indicating either a cold, formal psychological distance between the speakers or the opposite—a warm, emotional nearness. Additionally, he reports that

\[37\text{Ibid., p. 73.} \quad 38\text{Ibid., p. 74.} \quad 39\text{Ibid., p. 72.}\]
the appearance of the name in the middle of a repeated imperative or negative—such as, "hush, child, hush"—indicates emotional anxiety. 40

More patterns of word and phrase repetition are evident in the following examples:

"Come witch, come wizard, come Indian powwow, come devil himself, and here comes Goodman Brown."

"Were I weaker and blinder it might be happiness. Were I stronger, it might be endured more hopefully. But being what I find myself, methinks I am of all mortals the most fit to die."

"Evil is the nature of mankind. Evil must be your only happiness." 41

In the context of prose, these are all examples of incremental repetition, technically achieved by parallel phrases. In the first example, each of the fiends Brown invokes is more terrible than the last, until he finally names himself. The change in structure is grammatically necessary and is also a device to focus attention on Brown's inclusion in the evil company. In the second quotation, the repeated clauses mention two extremes before Georgiana says, "being what I find myself." The variation of words within the pattern has already gradually increased the meaning by ruling out two opposite possibilities to what Georgiana actually finds herself to be.

40 Mann, p. 346.

In the last, the devil generalizes on the nature of evil; then he applies evil to Brown and his wife in particular. The structure of the sentences is repeated, but the meaning shifts from generalities to particular applications. In all the examples, developing further the idea in each repeated parallel phrase, Hawthorne makes each phrase more weighty until the meaning of the completed sentence fairly topples into the reader's consciousness.

Hawthorne achieves appropriately cadenced prose by using several poetic techniques. Already illustrated is his use of alliteration and assonance, both for euphony and for unity of expression. Sentence inversion, a license granted poets, has been noted as a major characteristic of Hawthorne's syntax, also. His inversions are the result apparently of an attempt to place the most important words of the sentence in a stressed position, creating, as he does so, the same "sound" as poetry. Hawthorne's habitual repetition of key words and phrases, sometimes simply for rhythm, at other times to enrich meaning, is another of the techniques borrowed from the poet. Imagery and figurative language, although not the exclusive property of poetry, are elements in poetic composition which will be discussed in later chapters. One remaining device common to Hawthorne and the poet is the use of meter.

Leavis remarks that "the opening of "The Maypole of Merry Mount" is almost too deliberately poetic in rhythm
and word-order."  

Robert Mann notes the regularity of meter in important speeches, or those containing emotional utterances. Scansion of Hawthorne's prose does reveal a surprising regularity of meter, although, ordinarily, prose rhythm is marked by its lack of complete regularity. Scanning prose requires more arbitrary placement of stresses than with the accented syllables in poetry, but even varied readings of Hawthorne produce a regularity uncommon to most prose. A random, but typical, passage from "Young Goodman Brown" reveals "lines" of alternate trimeter and pentameter:

Hardly had he spoken
When he found himself amid calm night and solitude,
Listening to a roar of the wind
Which died heavily away through the forest.
He staggered against the rock,
And felt it chill and damp;
While a hanging twig, that had been all on fire,
Besprinkled his cheek with the coldest dew.

More than a few lines of his prose must be scanned to indicate a prevailing rhythm and regularity of meter, but Hawthorne suggests the "lines" into which his prose poem should be divided by his heavy use of punctuation. His lengthy sentences are broken regularly with commas, which cause them to look

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42 Leavis, p. 185.  
43 Mann, pp. 343-344.  
44 Hawthorne's Works, II. 105.
startlingly like free verse when arranged on the page:

Pretending to look earnestly at this respectable person's stomach,

Roderick assured him that his snake was a copper-head,

And had been generated by the immense quantities of that base metal,

With which he daily defiled his fingers.  

A cooler head prevails in Hyatt Waggoner, who suggests that Hawthorne's striking rhythm is due only to the romanticist's syntactical patterns. He says that the following structure is typical of Hawthorne's sentence arrangements: one long phrase, two short ones, and a long phrase. Examples of this pattern are readily available in "Drowne's Wooden Image":

He was the first American who is known to have attempted—in a very humble line, it is true—that art in which we can now reckon so many names already distinguished, or rising to distinction.

But there was no longer any motion in the lifelike image nor any real woman in the workshop, nor even the witchcraft of a sunny shadow, that might have deluded people's eyes as it flitted along the street.

In addition to the arrangement of words and phrases, Hawthorne also achieves rhythm through meaning. The patterned use of content makes Hawthorne's syntax functional when it observes the same patterns.

46 Waggoner, p. 172.
47 Hawthorne's Works, II, 348.
Robert Gross declares that, in *Fanshawe*, "there is a dynamic reciprocity between image and rhetoric, as in the connection between the labyrinthine garden and such a phrase as 'dark and intricate as was the way.'"\(^{48}\) Waggoner claims that, although "Hawthorne's style is essentially the same everywhere," in *The House of the Seven Gables* it emerges organically from content.\(^{49}\) He also comments on the duality in "The Canterbury Pilgrims," which is carried through to language balance and sentence structure. The rhythm of the sentences, Waggoner says, reminds the reader of the dualism of the tale.\(^{50}\)

An examination of "The Maypole of Merry Mount" and of "Ethan Brand" reveals the happy combination of "fashionings" and "material." The dualism that Waggoner notices in "The Canterbury Pilgrims" is evident also in "The Maypole of Merry Mount." Essentially, the tale embodies in one symbolic scene the triumph of the stern Puritans over the gay idolaters of Merry Mount.\(^{51}\) Hawthorne contrasts many elements in the tale: the somber Endicott with the flower-bedecked priest, the Puritan's whipping post with the Maypole, the dark wilderness with the bright clearing, and care and responsibility

\(^{48}\)Gross, p. 68.  
\(^{49}\)Waggoner, p. 173.  
\(^{50}\)Ibid., p. 102.  
\(^{51}\)According to Hawthorne, the tale is based on the recorded feud between the Puritans and the colonists at Mt. Wollaston, Massachusetts, *Hawthorne’s Works*, I. 70.
with joyful abandonment. His ultimate goal is to point out that life, and particularly love, is a synthesis of these opposites, and for this purpose he uses the newly married Lord and Lady of the May.

Hawthorne's sentence and paragraph structure supports the duality. He seems to write in contrasting pairs even when he is not contrasting the opposing forces in the story. In his description of the May festival, he writes,

These were Gothic monsters, though perhaps of Grecian ancestry. On the shoulders of a comely youth uprose the head and branching antlers of a stag; A second, human in all other points, had the grim visage of a wolf; A third, still with the trunk and limbs of a mortal man, showed the beard and horns of a venerable he-goat.52

The rest of the paragraph continues similarly.

Syntactical phrases and clauses come in pairs which reinforce the opposition of darkness and light in the story:

Now leave we the priest to marry them, and the masquers to sport around the Maypole, till the last sunbeam be withdrawn from its summit, and the shadows of the forest mingle gloomily in the dance.53

The first two clauses with their mention of marry, masquers, sport and Maypole suggest joy; the last two phrases with their withdrawn, shadows, forest, and gloomily offer the contrast. Furthermore, the latter phrases contain the contrasting sunbeam and shadows. Balance and contrast also predominate in these sentences and phrases:

52 Hawthorne's Works. I, 71. 53 Ibid., I, 75.
They looked first at each other, and then into the grim captain's face.

Should the grizzly saints establish their jurisdiction over the gay sinners . . . .

Sworn triflers of a lifetime, they would not venture among the sober truths of life not even to be truly blest. 54

A more involved use of the device is evident in the climactic conversation between Endicott and the young lovers. The last speech, by Edith, is quoted entire; the other three are all of the same length, but portions are omitted here:

"Youth," said Endicott, "ye stand in an evil case . . . ."

"Stern man," cried the May Lord, "how can I move thee?"

"Not so," replied the immigable zealot, "we are not wont . . . ."

"Be it death," said Edith, "and lay it all on me." 55

The antithetical characters alternate speeches, but all four utterances are arranged with the break in the first sentence. Here again, Hawthorne makes use of incremental repetition in identifying the speakers. Each identification is more involved and increasingly abstract until the reader is startled by the reversion to a simple "said Edith" in the last bare and powerful statement.

Even when Hawthorne is not using balanced but contrasting sentence elements, he nevertheless uses pairs—whether of modifiers, objects, or actions:

54 Ibid., I, 82, 78, 76. 55 Ibid., I, 82-83.
... the verdure, so fresh and dewy ... .

Where this green and flowery splendor ...

Spring decked the hallowed emblem with young blossoms and fresh green boughs; Summer brought roses of the deepest blush and the perfected foliage of the forest; Autumn enriched it with that red and yellow gorgeousness which converts each wildwood leaf into a painted flower; and Winter silvered it with sleet, and hung it round with icicles ... .

... make it a land of sermon and psalm forever. 56

Duality of phrasing is maintained even when no contrast is involved:

When they met in conclave, it was never to keep up the old English mirth, but to hear sermons three hours long, or to proclaim bounties on the heads of wolves or the scalps of Indians.

Their festivals were fast days, and their chief pastime was the singing of psalms. 57

Balance and contrast pervade the fabric of the entire allegory, but these examples indicate the extent to which syntax supports Hawthorne's imagery.

If "The Maypole of Merry Mount" is a study of parallel lines, or antithetical forces, "Ethan Brand" is a study in concentric circles. The material of the tale, as well as its plot, is circular. The title character, musing before his lime-kiln, is prompted by the devil to look for the Unpardonable Sin. He searches world-wide only to find that the sin has

56 Ibid., I, 71, 76-77, 78.
57 Ibid., I, 77.
hardened in his heart during his travels. He returns to his kiln to join the devil there, at the site of his former innocence.

Hawthorne's syntax often supports the circular structure of the tale, although not so consistently as syntax re-echoes the contrasts in "The Maypole." Two paragraphs near the first of the story suggest the structure:

Bartram and his little son, while they were talking thus sat watching the same lime-kiln that had been the scene of Ethan Brand's solitary and meditative life, before he began his search for the Unpardonable Sin.

... there follows a description of the lime-kiln and of the process of converting marble into lime.

It is a lonesome, and, when the character is inclined to thought, may be an intensely thoughtful occupation; as it proved in the case of Ethan Brand, who had mused to such strange purposes, in days gone by, while the fire in this very kiln was burning.

The idea of a "meditative life" in the opening sentence is returned to in the last sentence as "thoughtful occupation." The next item repeated is the name, Ethan Brand, and the opening and closing references to the same lime-kiln and the very kiln complete the circle.

The last words of the following sentence return to the meaning given in the first, thereby creating a vague awareness in the reader of going nowhere, because he ends where he began:

And then, without mirth in his countenance, but as if moved by an involuntary recognition of the infinite absurdity of seeking throughout the world for what was the closest of all things to himself, and looking into

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58 Ibid., III, 477-479.
every heart, save his own, for what has hidden in no other breast, he broke into a laugh of scorn.\textsuperscript{59}

In a sense, the reader has accompanied Brand on his journey once more through the locution of this statement. The next paragraph contains a similar return based upon the same element, Brand's laughter:

The solitary mountainside was made dismal by it. . . . (A digression follows, discussing laughter in general) this strange man looked inward at his own heart, and burst into laughter that rolled away into the night, and was indistinctly reverberated among the hills.\textsuperscript{60}

The musings on laughter are encircled by Ethan Brand's specific laugh as it is heard in relation to the hills.

On another occasion, Hawthorne describes two parallel, circular motions which employ synonymous verbs. Ethan Brand "bent forward to gaze into" the furnace; then he "drew quietly back." "'I have looked,' said he, 'into many a human heart . . . .'" Then Bartram "shrunk farther from his companion."\textsuperscript{61}

This same passage begins earlier with the pronouncement that "Ethan Brand rose from the log, and flung open the door of the kiln." The first of the parallel actions ends with this sentence: "Ethan Brand, however, drew quietly back, and closed the door of the kiln."\textsuperscript{62} By using identical sentence structure and by varying only the necessary words, Hawthorne forces his syntax to support his dominant imagery.

\textsuperscript{59}Ibid., III, 482; italics mine.
\textsuperscript{60}Ibid.; italics mine.
\textsuperscript{61}Ibid., III, 484; italics mine.
\textsuperscript{62}Ibid.
Shorter sentences also illustrate Hawthorne's use of similar words to suggest a semantic return, at least:

"The man's head is turned,"--muttered the lime-burner to himself. "He may be a sinner like the rest of us,—nothing more likely,—but, I'll be sworn, he is a madman, too."

"You make the little man to be afraid, Captain," said the German Jew, turning up the dark and strong outline of his visage from his stooping posture. "But look again, and by chance, I shall cause you to see somewhat that is very fine, upon my word!"63

Finally, Brand's ignominious end is described in the last words of the romance, "the relics of Ethan Brand were crumbled into fragments." The word, *fragments*, appears also in the first sentence of the romance, creating the repeated motif which Schubert defines as rhythm. In this case, the rhythm is circular, because the motif appears early and is only returned to at last.

63Ibid., III, 485, 491; italics mine.
CHAPTER IV

FICTIONAL DEVICES FOR PREPARATION OF THE
NEUTRAL GROUND

Commenting on his own style in the Preface to Twice-Told Tales, Hawthorne remarks that

Every sentence, so far as it embodies thought or sensibility, may be understood and felt by anybody who will give himself the trouble to read it, and will take up the book in a proper mood.  

Hawthorne does not trust to the chance that his reader will be "in a proper mood," however; rather, he does as much as he can in his role as the story-teller to create a neutral territory which will insure the success of his romances. Terence Martin suggests that Hawthorne chose the tale and romance in the first place because in these forms he could incorporate imaginative material, such as myth and legend, and write on "neutral ground."  

Roy Male writes that Hawthorne's fiction shows "the actual and imaginary meeting."  

Arthur H. Quinn says that Hawthorne creates a "twilight zone between the real and the supernatural," and that the reader surrenders his

1 "Preface to Twice-Told Tales," Hawthorne's Works, I, 17.


doubts because of the atmosphere which Hawthorne creates. And these are all the results of Hawthorne's stylistic techniques; these are the effects which he achieves. Hawthorne evidently knew that he would have to accomplish the creation of a neutral territory if his tales were to be acceptable, for he bemoans the absence of a "poetic or fairy precinct where actualities would not be so terribly insisted upon as they are, and must needs be, in America." As author, he uses all the devices at his disposal to insure the reader's favorable mood; in short, he tries as soon as possible to obtain from his reader the "willing suspension of disbelief" which Coleridge thought was necessary for the proper reading of poetry.

Hawthorne begins to paint his imaginative pictures with the first strokes of his pen, providing informative titles and subtitles. Through his titles, he gives his readers something real; he names prosaically either the chief character, the dominant symbol, or the major theme. "Ethan Brand," "Young Goodman Brown," "David Swan," "Wakefield," "The Gentle Boy," and even "The White Old Maid" indicate the character which the reader is to find in the tale. The reader soon learns, also, to look for the symbols that he finds in such titles as "The Minister's Black Veil," "The Maypole of...

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5 Hawthorne's Works, VI, 15.
Hawthorne introduces major themes in "The Threefold Destiny," "Egotism; or, the Bosom Serpent," and "The Hall of Fantasy."

His most artistically constructed titles are his most intricate ones, in which he manages varied combinations of the three items of information. "Roger Malvin's Burial," for example, contains a character name, a situation, and the implication of a theme. Roger Malvin is introduced early in the tale, and because of the title, the reader awaits Malvin's burial. Ironically, Reuben Bourne's promise to perform the burial is never honored, thus precipitating his feelings of guilt and the effect of that guilt on him which is the theme of the tale. Similarly, "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" names a character whose appearance the reader, along with Robin, awaits with growing uneasiness. Hawthorne creates suspense with his title, by naming Molineux as a character but only indirectly developing him before his brief, climactic appearance. Robin's search for him becomes the reader's also. The tale could be called "Robin's Quest" and be aptly titled, but Hawthorne creates a similar anticipation in the reader by naming the object of the search in the title. Molineux's rank of Major obliquely suggests the situation of the story: the officer's Tory activities have branded him an enemy of the colonists; his relationship to Robin (i.e., "My Kinsman") introduces one of the themes of the story: the attainment of maturity through acceptance of inherited guilt.
Hawthorne the romancer, the creator of "Faery Land" and imaginative precincts, probably had a very definite purpose in mind when using such informative titles, if one can assume that his statements to a fledgling poet are indicative of his approach to his own art:

In a story like this, it is allowable, and highly desirable, (as you yourself have felt) to have as much mist and glorified fog as possible, diffused about on all sides, but still there should be a distinct pathway to tread upon—a clue that the reader shall confide in, as being firmly fastened somewhere. People will not advance far into a poem, unless they know—or, at least, begin to know, or fancy they are about knowing—something of the matter in hand.6

After Hawthorne supplies his readers a clue in the title, he sets about diffusing "as much mist and glorified fog as possible." Once he gives his auditors something tangible, he immediately begins to build an imaginative world around them, using the subtitle, the preface, and the point of view of the story.

Hawthorne frequently adds subtitles which suggest that the story is not to be a faithful representation of reality. Q. D. Leavis describes them as hints for the interpretation of the tales.7 Terence Martin notes that few of the subtitles are simply alternate titles, a device common to eighteenth and

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early nineteenth-century writers, but that many of the sub-
titles give an indication of the kind of tale that Hawthorne
is trying to write. 8 "The Minister's Black Veil," for
example, is designated "A Parable" by its author; "Feathertop"
is "A Moralized Legend"; "The Great Carbuncle" is "A Mystery
of the White Mountains." All his subtitles indicate a form,
or type, of story which the reader recognizes as one dealing
in ideas, not in actualities.

Whether Hawthorne uses a subtitle to lead his reader into
his imaginative world or not, he establishes as much of the
fairy land as he can through the use of mechanical introductory
devices. In one of his formal prefaces, 9 Hawthorne admits
the "antique" quality of prefaces, yet he employs various
forms of the device within his stories, recognizing, perhaps,
their ability to give the forthcoming story an antique tone.
In their most rigid form, they are framework sketches, and at
their most informal, they are brief, once-upon-a-time intro-
ductions, but they are all obviously authorial comments.

Hawthorne's frameworks serve several purposes for their
stories in addition to being sketches in themselves. The
four "Legends of the Province House" are introduced and unified
by the author's accounts of his visits to the Old Province
House, the mansion of the royal governors of old Massachusetts.

8 Martin, pp. 52-53.
9 Hawthorne's Works. VI, 13.
Hawthorne describes the building in these sketches, relating each concrete detail to the shadowy past; he introduces and briefly characterizes the "elderly person" who tells him the legends; and he tries to imagine the historical events connected with the house. Then he returns to the elderly gentleman who tells him the first legend which he later admits seems more real to him than the factual events which actually occurred in the house.

Hawthorne makes no attempt to integrate the tales with the prefatory sketches; rather he says in effect, here is the story, believe it or not:

... The old gentleman was really possessed of some very pleasant gossip about the Province House. ... He professed to have received it at one or two removes from an eye-witness; but this derivation, together with the lapse of time, must have afforded opportunities for many variations of the narrative, so that despairing of literal and absolute truth, I have not scrupled to make such further changes as seemed conducive to the reader's profit and delight.10

Here, Hawthorne is explicit about the function of the framework device: it is used to explain that the tale is not based on historical fact but on "gossip" or legend. Leland Schubert also observes Hawthorne's candor in the framework sketches, writing that Hawthorne uses them to indicate that the stories are "not real but artificial, not fact but fiction."11

10 Ibid., I, 276.

Terence Martin suggests that frames such as the Old Province House sketch are used by Hawthorne to gain access to America's colonial past, and to provide a neutral territory for the tales by presenting the legend but surrounding it with reality.

The almost skeptical pose which Hawthorne assumes in the foregoing quotation which prefaces "Howe's Masquerade" is reassumed when the story is finished:

When the truth-telling accents of the elderly gentleman were hushed, I drew a long breath and looked round the room, striving, with the best energy of my imagination, to throw a tinge of romance and historic grandeur over the realities of the scene. But my nostrils snuffed up a scent of cigar smoke, clouds of which the narrator had emitted by way of visible emblem, I suppose, of the nebulous obscurity of his tales.

In spite of the apparent skepticism, only the sensuous reality of cigar smoke shatters completely the illusion of the tale. Hawthorne's seeming inability at this point to lose himself in the fanciful stories may be a use of what is commonly termed reverse psychology. Since he provides a sympathetic characterization of the old story-teller, Hawthorne may be hoping that the reader will respond by obstinately believing the old gentleman's Gothic gossip, long enough, at any rate, to experience the intended effect of the story. If the reader persists in joining in the author's skeptical attitude, however, Hawthorne arranges a gradual change in his opinions.

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12 Martin, p. 59.  
13 Ibid., p. 64.  
14 Hawthorne's Works, I, 289.
Throughout the framework sketches, the narrator's belief in
the legends increases as the story-teller's believability
decreases, until before the last tale, Hawthorne admits to
imaginative embellishments of his own, and after its conclusion
he remarks that

... Neither of us would have wondered, had a hoop-
petticoated phantom of Esther Dudley tottered into the
chamber, walking her rounds..."15

Hawthorne's formal framework sketches are used in only
six completed works— with each of the four "Legends of the
Province House," "The Christmas Banquet," and the most well
known, The Scarlet Letter—although he had plans for an
elaborate frame to be built around several of his early
stories, to be called "The Story-Teller."16 More often,
Hawthorne chooses to write into his tales a relaxed, unannounced
preface. He employs this device in four of the romances17 and
in numerous sketches. Noting Hawthorne's method in the
sketches, Thomas F. Walsh, paraphrasing the romanticist, terms
these the "Illustrated Ideas."18 In such efforts as "David
Swan" and "Wakefield," Hawthorne devotes a generous portion

15 Ibid., I, 342.
16 George Parsons Lathrop, "Introductory Note,"
Hawthorne's Works, I, 9.
17 "The Threelfold Destiny," "Bappaccini's Daughter," "The
Hall of Fantasy," and "The Wives of the Dead."
18 Thomas P. Walsh, Jr., "'Wakefield' and Hawthorne's
Illustrated Ideas: A Study in Form," Emerson Society
of the material to the posing of a question or a meditation upon an idea which he illustrates in the last half of the sketch. The device, used in this manner, is prosaic; in the tales, although he is still in essence merely illustrating an idea, Hawthorne must additionally prepare his reader to suspend his disbelief because the extended illustration requires a friendly, receptive attitude.

Terence Martin, citing Emerson's complaint that Hawthorne "invites his readers too much into his study, opens the process before them," refers to Hawthorne's inner prefaces as "his workshop method." Martin explains Hawthorne's workshop method as the author's device for making "the conditions of his fiction understood." And Hawthorne does throw open the doors to his workshop at the first of "The Threefold Destiny":

I have sometimes produced a singular and not unpleasing effect, so far as my own mind was concerned, by imagining a train of incidents in which the spirit and mechanism of the fairy legend should be combined with the characters and manners of familiar life. He elaborates on these remarks in the remainder of the paragraph, adding that the tale "may be considered as an allegory." Added to these cautionary remarks to the reader is the subtitle, "A Fairy Legend." Hawthorne uses both

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19 Martin, p. 51.
20 Ibid., p. 52.
21 Ibid.
22 Hawthorne's Works, I, 527.
mechanical devices at his disposal to prepare the reader's imagination.

Containing the same cautions, but in more intricate form, is the preface within "Rappaccini's Daughter." It is written after the style of an introduction to a tale by M. de l'Aubepine, reviewing the author's fame, his style, and his other works. Hawthorne is having fun with himself, no doubt, but he manages to include the customary warning that M. de l'Aubepine

... contents himself with a very slight embroidery of outward manners,—the faintest possible counterfeit of real life,—and endeavors to create an interest by some less obvious peculiarity of the subject. 23

Possibly to compensate for the flippant tone of the preface, Hawthorne begins the tale proper with a fairy-tale-like sentence: "A young man, named Giovanni Guasconti, came, very long ago, from the more southern region of Italy, to pursue his studies at the University of Padua." 24

Less artificial than the framework sketches and the prefaces are Hawthorne's more common expository and reminiscent introductions, which he employs to prepare the readers for the atmosphere of his tales. The historically oriented legends generally open with an explanation of the event on which they are based. "Endicott and the Red Cross" begins

At noon of an autumnal day, more than two centuries ago, the English colors were displayed by the standard-

23Ibid., II, 108. 24Ibid., II, 109.
bearer of the Salem trainband, which had mustered for martial exercise under the orders of John Endicott. After this brief setting, Hawthorne pauses to describe the period and the colonists's situation before resuming the narrative, a description which is not without editorial comment. He reviews the "tyrannically violent" measures of the King, "royal injustices," and "the bigoted and haughty primate, Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury." Hawthorne not only provides necessary background information with such an introduction, but he also establishes the mood and tone of the tale. He writes of the religious exiles buckling on their armor, of swords raised against the King, of the possibility of the colonists's struggling against "the giant strength of the King's right arm." And the story is concerned with a violent action--Endicott's rending of the English banner--by which Hawthorne prefigures the violence of the later Revolution. In contrast, the introduction to "The Gray Champion," although it serves the same informative function, suggests an entirely different mood. Here, the author portrays New England merely "groaning" in "sullen submission," the people "smiling mysteriously," and the presence of "a subdued and silent agitation." The mood of the story is consistent with Hawthorne's suggestion in the introduction; it is one of quiet resentment, as Hawthorne depicts the latent power of

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25 Ibid., I, 484.
26 Ibid., I, 21.
the "New England hereditary spirit"\textsuperscript{27} which can be summoned forth by the people in an hour of peril.

Hawthorne uses the introductions consistently to evoke the proper atmosphere for the ensuing story, whether or not he uses them to provide historical background. Usually, he announces the legendary nature of the tale before he plunges into the actual narrative. The author's remarks at the beginning of "The Wedding Knell" suggest the imaginative quality of the story:

There is a certain church in the city of New York which I have always regarded with peculiar interest, on account of a marriage there solemnized, under very singular circumstances, in my grandmother's girlhood. That venerable lady chanced to be a spectator of the scene, and ever after made it her favorite narrative. ... With such a place, though the tumult of the city rolls beneath its tower, one would be willing to connect some legendary interest.\textsuperscript{28}

The statements about "peculiar interest," "very singular circumstances," "in my grandmother's girlhood," "her favorite narrative," "the tumult of the city rolls beneath the tower," and "legendary interest" combine to excite the reader's curiosity, to establish the unreality of the tale and at the same time its possibility, to connect paradoxically that shadowy legend with the reality of the church tower as it exists in the midst of the busy, very real city, to create a kind of aesthetic distance by the physical distance of the tower from the street, and to offer additional verisimilitude.

\textsuperscript{27}Ibid., I, 31. \textsuperscript{28}Ibid., I, 41.
in the person of an eye-witness to the scene. Here again, Hawthorne surrounds his imaginative fairy story with the concrete world in order to achieve the "neutrality" he needs.

Occasionally, Hawthorne is able to attain the same effects in only one sentence, as in "The Wives of the Dead":

The following story, the simple and domestic incidents of which may be deemed scarcely worth relating, after such a lapse of time, awakened some degree of interest, a hundred years ago, in a principal seaport of the Bay Province.²⁹

The title and the immediately following phrase, "simple and domestic incidents," subtly suggest to the reader an equation of the marvelous and the mundane. In addition, Hawthorne establishes the antique, legendary quality of the narrative by referring to the one hundred-year lapse of time, and his characteristic apology, that the tale is "scarcely worth repeating," only arouses the reader's curiosity and willingness to hear the story and to judge it for himself. The reader's willingness to listen is apparently just what Hawthorne hopes to stimulate with all his introductory devices.

Several of Hawthorne's opening statements are designed to appeal to the reader's child-like acceptance of his tales by the use of an elementary device, the fairy tale beginning:

One sunshiny morning, in the good old times of the town of Boston . . . .³⁰

²⁹Ibid., III, 598.
In the old times of religious gloom and intolerance lived Richard Digby, the gloomiest and most intolerant of a stern brotherhood . . . .31

At nightfall, once in the olden times . . . .32

In those strange old times, when fantastic dreams and madmen's reveries were realized among the actual circumstances of life . . . .33

Two lovers, once upon a time . . . .34

Once upon a time--but whether in the time past or time to come is a matter of little or no moment--

Terence Martin, writing specifically about "The Hollow of the Three Hills," suggests that the fairy tale opening is not only a device to get into the story but also an example of "time functioning as a place."36 Hawthorne seems to mean, Martin feels, that if the time he indicates is possible, then the place and the events he describes are possible. But this interdependence of time and place is inherent in the fairy-story device, since the reader has been conditioned, more than likely, from childhood to surrender his skepticism when he hears one of the variations of "once-upon-a-time."

34 "The Lily's Quest," Hawthorne's Works, I, 495.
35 "Earth's Holocaust," Hawthorne's Works, II, 430.
36 Martin, p. 49.
Although Hawthorne characteristically prefaces his tales with an explanation of the method of their creation or an attempt to create the proper mood within the reader, he begins several tales *in medias res*, in the middle of things. Surprisingly, this group contains a large proportion of his best tales, "The Minister's Black Veil," "Young Goodman Brown," "The Artist of the Beautiful," "Egotism; or, the Bosom Serpent," "Ethan Brand," "The Ambitious Guest," and "The Snow Image." Of these, the last two contain a pause, after opening in the midst of the action, for several lines of exposition, but they are composed of descriptive matter and do not contain Hawthorne's voice so obviously as those with formal introductory comments. Since the stories were not written in any one particular "period" of Hawthorne's literary development, there seems to be no explanation for Hawthorne's use of this technique in beginning these tales. Perhaps, as Martin suggests in regard to Hawthorne's habit of using elaborate introductions, the romanticist was faced with the necessity of inventing his own conventions, and therefore was required to do a certain amount of experimenting with forms.\(^{37}\) No matter what Hawthorne's reason for using such a technique, the reader, who is more accustomed to an avoidance of authorial comment since the advent of realism and naturalism, finds that the relatively abrupt beginnings

add to the effectiveness of the tales. Interestingly, when Hawthorne allows his characters to control the tale from its beginning, he does not so often abandon the narrative to comment as author.

All of Hawthorne's introductory devices attempt to establish the neutral ground for his fancy pictures by juxtaposing reality and imagination. In "Legends of the Province House," for example, the framework sketches describe in detail the reality of the house; the tales themselves are shadowy and imaginative, depicting Gothic portraits, curses, and phantoms lurking within the real house. To maintain the precarious balance which he establishes with titles, prefaces, and introductions, Hawthorne as story-teller controls the mood throughout the story with the point of view of the tale and with his own intrusive comments.

The points of view Hawthorne uses in his romances are chosen to sustain the legend-like atmosphere of his tales by keeping his voice evident through the persona of the story-teller. Harold Levin writes that Hawthorne's narrators give the reader a "spectatorial point of view"; they seem to be always near the audience's elbow, pointing out the significance of the action. To achieve such a viewpoint technically, Hawthorne writes in the first person or, more often, as an omniscient narrator.

His use of first person marks his prefaces and introductions, as has been illustrated, and sets the scene of his fairy land by preparing the audience for a tale which he admits is not fact, but which may possibly be true. He generally continues the first person only in sketches, such as "Sights from a Steeple" and "Fire Worship."

Occasionally, Hawthorne does use first person in quasi-tales such as "Mrs. Bullfrog," in which Mr. Bullfrog must tell the story himself or else the effect of his wife's metamorphoses will be lost. An omniscient narrator in such a work would destroy the mystery and irony of the tale. The circumstance is similar in "The Devil in Manuscript," a tale which presents the author, not from his own point of view, but from that of a mysterious guest. The guest is technically used to give the author someone to confide in and to give the reader a relatively objective, although satirical, view of the author.

In a few other instances in his short fiction, Hawthorne uses first person point of view, but he prefers to present his tales from the viewpoint of a story-teller, using a modified omniscient method. Hawthorne's modifications of the standard omniscient narrator result in some of the ambiguity in his work which is so often discussed by critics. Many scholars find a disparity between the ideas embodied in Hawthorne's narratives and those which he inserts into the
action as narrator or author. Ernest Sandeen, discussing in particular *The Scarlet Letter*, says that the point of view is, paradoxically, impartial but compassionate. The paradox lies in Hawthorne's narrative habit of presenting his characters's actions objectively and then commenting upon the scenes. As omniscient narrator, he controls the presentation of action, however, as in the following scene from "Roger Malvin's Burial":

"... Tarry not, then, for a folly like this, but hasten away, if not for your own sake, for hers who will else be desolate."

Malvin spoke the last few words in a faltering voice, and their effect upon his companion was strongly visible. They reminded him that there were other and less questionable duties than that of sharing the fate of a man whom his death could not benefit. Nor can it be affirmed that no selfish feeling strove to enter Reuben's heart, though the consciousness made him more earnestly resist his companion's entreaties.

Only an omniscient narrator could affirm or deny the "selfish feeling" creeping into Reuben's heart, but in scenes of dialogue such as this one, Hawthorne does not always describe the motives and thoughts of his characters. He customarily allows his characters to complete an exchange before he intrudes to comment.

Hawthorne's omniscient point of view is used to allow the reader to view a symbol or development in the story from

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all angles. Leland Schubert applauds Hawthorne's ability to treat objects as pieces of sculpture, allowing the reader to walk around them. Citing Hawthorne's descriptive power, Schubert writes that

... he must have been alertly conscious of the idea that sculpture is design in space. He sets his figures in space and emphasizes this by letting us move very close to the great stone face and then farther and farther away from it.  

Hawthorne achieves the same effect of plasticity through his use of the omniscient point of view. By presenting the birthmark, for instance, from three points of view in "The Birthmark," he intensifies the reality of the mark:

Masculine observers, if the birthmark did not heighten their admiration, contented themselves with wishing it away, that the world might possess one living specimen of ideal loveliness without the semblance of a flaw. After his marriage,—for he thought little or nothing of the matter before,—Aylmer discovered that this was the case with himself.

At all seasons which should have been their happiest, he invariably and without intending it, nay, in spite of a purpose to the contrary, reverted to this one disastrous topic.

If Aylmer is overcome with hatred for the mark, as Hawthorne indicates in the foregoing passages, Georgiana is overcome with love for her husband and views her birthmark through its effect on him:

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41 Schubert, p. 43.
42 *Hawthorne's Works*, II, 49.
She felt how much more precious was such a sentiment than that meaner kind which would have borne with the imperfection for her sake, and have been guilty of treason to holy love by degrading its perfect idea to the level of the actual; and with her whole spirit she prayed that, for a single moment, she might satisfy his highest and deepest conception.\footnote{44}

Through the all-knowing point of view, Hawthorne is able to give the reaction of the animal-like Aminadab to the mark in contrast to the lofty but obsessed feelings of Aylmer and Georgiana:

"Yes, master," answered Aminadab, looking intently at the lifeless form of Georgiana; and then he muttered to himself, "If she were my wife, I'd never part with that birthmark."\footnote{45}

This thinly disguised aside comment by Aminadab is one of Hawthorne's few, jarring uses of the omniscient point of view. Carl Bode notes the melodramatic use of aside comments in \textit{Fanshawe},\footnote{46} but Hawthorne seems to have abandoned its frequently blatant use in the later tales.

Hawthorne sets the story-teller mood in his introductions, maintains it through the use of omniscient or first person point of view, and then relies on his position as the story-teller to intrude upon the action. He seems to be using the license as author to halt the action when he deems the time right for a meditative pause.

\footnote{44}Ibid., II, 65. \hspace{1em} \footnote{45}Ibid., II, 55. \hspace{1em} \footnote{46}Carl Bode, "Hawthorne's \textit{Fanshawe}: The Promising of Greatness," \textit{New England Quarterly}, XXIII (June, 1950), 237.
Some of his intrusive comments are in the form of aphorisms, which leads Robert Gross to remark that

Hawthorne never ceased to work into his novels and tales the moral or psychological reflections which occurred to him in the course of writing or which he had previously recorded in his notebooks; one could compile a small commonplace book from the *apergus* scattered throughout his work.  

Gross notes that the "insights" which Hawthorne offers may not be worthy of applause in themselves, but they provide a pause in the narrative flow for the contemplation of the happenings of the story in particular and the circumstances of life in general.  

One such insight is observed in "Egotism; or, the Bosom Serpent":

There is a pleasure—perhaps the greatest of which the sufferer is susceptible—in displaying the wasted or ulcerated limb, or the cancer in the breast; and the fouler the crime, with so much the more difficulty does the perpetrator prevent it from thrusting up its snake-like head to frighten the world; for it is that cancer, or that crime, which constitutes their respective individuality.

These utterances are Hawthorne's "commonplaces," but the ensuing sentences are more typical of his intrusive comments, because with them Hawthorne points to the meaning of his symbol and to the crime of its possessor:

Roderick Elliston, who, a little while before had held himself so scornfully above the common lot of men, now

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49 *Hawthorne's Works*, II, 309.
paid full allegiance to this humiliating law. The snake in his bosom seemed the symbol of a monstrous egotism to which everything was referred, and which he pampered, night and day, with a continual and exclusive sacrifice of devil worship. 50

Malcolm Cowley, writing about The Scarlet Letter, asserts that Hawthorne's intrusive comments are not essential to an understanding of the story; 51 Frederic Carpenter bewails Hawthorne's subjective comments in a tragedy which is otherwise acted out objectively, and therefore, superbly. 52 But Hyatt Waggoner warns that ignoring Hawthorne's intrusive remarks "has accounted for a number of critical misinterpretations of his work." 53 Waggoner explains that as a symbolist, Hawthorne does show his ideas objectively, but that as a nineteenth-century author, he does intrude and comment. According to Waggoner, "In his normal practice he depends on both image and rhetoric to express his meanings. " 54

Indeed, Hawthorne seems to assume that the reader welcomes his comments, since he usually conditions his reader, through subtitles and introductions, to expect a tale which will be only tinged with reality, one which will exemplify an idea, or one which will be "a moralized legend."

50 Ibid.
54 Ibid., p. 257.
The intrusive "voice" of Hawthorne often contributes a wry humor to his more somber tales. Hawthorne is guilty of abominable puns on occasion, but the reader senses that he uses them not only for their grotesque humor but also for the pleasant sport they give him. In "Mr. Higginbotham's Catastrophe," Dominicus Pike carries with him a quantity of tobacco for the "pretty girls along the Connecticut . . . knowing well that the country lasses of New England are generally great performers on pipes." One entire sketch is based on a pun; "Monsieur Du Miroir" is a monologue addressed by the author to his image in the mirror. Hawthorne ends by remarking, "Farewell, Monsieur du Miroir. Of you, perhaps, as of many men, it may be doubted whether you are the wiser, though your whole business is REFLECTION." Lest his auditors miss the joke, Hawthorne provides his own guffaw and knee-slap in the capital letters.

William L. Vance categorizes Hawthorne's methods of creating humor, but one dominant feature emerges: the wit is always that of the intrusive author. Hawthorne's characters are not especially funny in themselves, but Hawthorne's comments about them are. In "Feathertop," the scarecrow is merely a pathetic figure, but Hawthorne cannot resist intruding to point out a similarity:

There it stood—poor devil of a contrivance that it was!—with only the thinnest vesture of human similitude about it, through which was evident the stiff, rickety, incongruous, faded, tattered, good-for-nothing patchwork of its substance, ready to sink in a heap upon the floor, as conscious of its own unworthiness to be erect. Shall I confess the truth? At its present point of vivification, the scarecrow reminds me of some of the lukewarm and abortive characters, composed of heterogeneous materials, used for the thousandth time, and never worth using, with which romance writers (and myself, no doubt, among the rest) have so overpopulated the world of fiction.

Hawthorne's facetiousness is the quality that most tries the sensibilities of Herbert Read, who calls it a "trying feature of American writing" in general. As for Hawthorne in particular, Read writes,

Facetiousness is the greatest blemish on Hawthorne's style; it is almost everywhere, and but for its presence Hawthorne would rank with a select company of four or five of our purest writers.

But Hawthorne's facetious humor serves as bond between author and auditor, which sustains the sympathetic relationship he needs for the acceptance of his tales and re-emphasizes his position as story-teller.

Another typical tone which Hawthorne's intrusive voice takes is that of questioning or skepticism. Rhetorical questions are one intrusive device with which Hawthorne provides the questioning, searching pause. In "Rappaccini's Daughter," Hawthorne, through Giovanni's eyes, describes Rappaccini tending his garden and concludes by asking,


Was this garden, then, the Eden of the present world? And this man, with such a perception of harm in what his own hands caused to grow,—was he the Adam?®

Hawthorne seldom answers his own questions immediately; he poses them for the reader's contemplation, while he busies himself with illustrating possible answers through the narrative.

At his least effective, to the modern ear at any rate, Hawthorne indulges in rhetorical flights, such as the following from "Roger Malvin's Burial":

Oh, who, in the enthusiasm of a daydream, has not wished that he were a wanderer in a world of summer wilderness, with one fair and gentle being hanging lightly on his arm?61

Passages such as this one lead W. C. Brownell to remark that Hawthorne's style "views the purple patch with the unmoved placidity of the color blind . . . ."® Despite the purple tinge to such questions, Hawthorne still provides the pause for meditation which he evidently hopes will cause the reader to recognize the universality of the emotions and situations he presents.

Hawthorne's rhetorical questions, then, are merely a device by which the story-teller provides a pause and suggests possible ramifications of the action to the reader. Similarly, his intrusive comments and his omniscient or first person point of view allow him to retain control of the narrative's effect

60 Hawtome's Works. II, 112. 61 Ibid., II, 397.
on the reader. Just as his prefaces and introductions establish the "neutral territory" for romance, so Hawthorne's intrusive role directs the progress of the story.
CHAPTER V

IMAGERY AND SYMBOLISM

Once Hawthorne establishes the neutral territory of his tales he must sustain the mood of unreality and yet give his readers something substantial by "firmly fastening" his narratives somewhere. He is capable of much more subtlety in sustaining the atmosphere of a "fairy precinct" than he is in its creation through introductory and intrusive devices. He imbues the realities of his tales with figurative association and symbolic importance, merging image and idea. Occasionally, Hawthorne's symbols seem to be obvious, causing the romanticist to brand all his fiction as "blasted allegories,"¹ but they only appear so because he prepares his readers for their symbolic role with suggestion after suggestion. To this end Hawthorne employs personifications, metaphors, similes, emblematic words, and a figurative use of time in the setting of his tales.

Beginning his story with reference to a concrete object, Hawthorne leaps to the conceptual by means of figurative expression and symbolic associations. Just as he requires

his readers to draw upon their emotions in his connotative use of diction, and just as he stresses effects and qualities of things with his syntax, so Hawthorne evokes emotional responses through figures of speech and nascent symbols.

One such device which Hawthorne uses frequently is personification. In its more obvious form, it appears in "The Gray Champion":

Long, long may it be, ere he comes again! His hour is one of darkness, and adversity, and peril. But should domestic tyranny oppress us, or the invader's step pollute our soil, still may the Gray Champion come, for he is the type of New England's hereditary spirit; and his shadowy march, on the eve of danger, must ever be the pledge that New England's sons will vindicate their ancestry.  

Here Hawthorne is simply answering a question which he poses several times during the narrative and which he has already answered implicitly in the tale.

Hawthorne evidently enjoys working with personifications, naming such characters as "Old Stony Phiz," "Mr. Gathergold," "Mr. Greatheart," "Mr. Smooth-it-away," "Giant Transcendentalist," and the "Rev. Mr. Stumble-at-Truth." These characters appear in decidedly allegorical works, "The Celestial Railroad" and "The Great Stone Face," justifying their obviously allegorical names. Still, the reader experiences a certain delight in reading them, a delight which is probably communicated from the author who wrote them. Although such

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2Hawthorne's Works, I, 31; italics mine.
uses are obvious, Hawthorne employs the device in other tales, too. DeHayes notes that most of the names of Hawthorne's major characters relate to the theme of the story in which they appear.\(^3\) He cites those of *The Scarlet Letter* which have been often noted by scholars: *Dimmesdale*--the valley of shadow; *Chillingworth*--worth becoming cold; and *Prynne*--a combination of pride and sin. He suggests also that *Rappaccini* is the personification of *rapacity* of innocence.\(^4\)

Many critics point out that *Goodman* is the Puritan equivalent of *Mr.*, which makes young Goodman Brown a type of Everyman.

In the course of the narratives, however, Hawthorne inserts so many subtle personifications that his tales are peopled with qualities and ideas as well as with real characters. He writes that "New England groaned";\(^5\) that "Truth often finds its way close-muffled in robes of sleep."\(^6\)

In "The Birthmark," Hawthorne attributes an eerie life-like existence to the mark in such phrases as "the spectral hand that wrote mortality where he would fain have worshipped,"\(^7\) and "the firm grip of this little hand."\(^8\) By dealing figuratively with the birthmark, Hawthorne makes it Aylmer's adversary in the plot with such substance that the author's

\(^4\)Ibid.
\(^5\)Hawthorne's *Works*, I, 21.
\(^6\)Ibid., II, 52.
\(^7\)Ibid., II, 50-51.
\(^8\)Ibid., II, 53.
explanation at the conclusion of the story is unnecessary:

Alas! it was too true! The fatal hand had grappled with the mystery of life, and was the bond by which an angelic spirit kept itself in union with a mortal frame.\(^9\)

That Hawthorne thought in terms of the possible reality of abstract or metaphoric expression is evident from a journal entry which outlines an idea for a story:

To make literal pictures of figurative expressions;--for instance, he bursts into tears--a man suddenly turned into a shower of briny drops. An explosion of laughter--a man blowing up, and his fragments flying about on all sides. He cast his eyes upon the ground--a man standing eyeless, with his eyes on the ground, staring up at him in wonderment etc. etc. etc.\(^{10}\)

Most of Hawthorne's figures are commonplace, everyday ones, but he insists on them so forcefully that they take on the character of metaphysical conceits, just as do the foregoing suggestions in Hawthorne's journal.

Arlin Turner notes Hawthorne's tendency to use "figures of speech and symbols [which] are never private or remote or esoteric; in fact they derive mainly from commonplace sources and belong to common knowledge."\(^{11}\) And Hawthorne seems never to strain for an especially unusual figure of speech. Instead, he relies on those possessing an easy familiarity for the reader; sometimes that very familiarity makes an expression

\(^9\text{Ibid., II. 69.}\)

\(^{10}\text{Nathaniel Hawthorne, The American Notebooks, edited by Randall Stewart (New Haven, 1933), p. 107.}\)

\(^{11}\text{Turner, p. 133.}\)
doubly effective:

As the old withered woman spoke, a smile glimmered on her countenance, like lamplight on the wall of a sepulchre. 12

... their gayety continued to blaze higher like--(an ominous comparison)--the flickering brilliancy of a lamp which has but a little while to burn. 13

Other metaphors and similes share the commonness of the foregoing examples, but without their special effect:

... the laboratory of nature ... 14

... the earliest peep of dawn ... 15

... as if the loftiest mountain peak had summoned a council of its kindred clouds ... 16

... her scarlet petticoat jutted out over a hoop, as if she were standing in a balloon. 17

In fact, it is not the unusualness of Hawthorne's figures which merits attention; Stewart writes that most of the author's metaphoric images are used over and over until they become characteristic of him. 18 It is, therefore, not the quality of his figurative expressions which distinguishes his individual style but their quantity. A typical descriptive

15 Ibid., I, 183.
16 Ibid., I, 185.
paragraph from "Rappaccini's Daughter" illustrates the many and varied forms of suggestion which Hawthorne uses:

Soon there emerged from under a sculptured portal the figure of a young girl, arrayed with as much richness of taste as the most splendid of the flowers, beautiful as the day, and with a bloom so deep and vivid that one shade more would have been too much. She looked redundant with life, health, and energy; all of which attributes were bound down and compressed, as it were, and girdled tensely, in their luxuriance, by her virgin zone. Yet Giovanni's fancy must have grown morbid while he looked down into the garden; for the impression which the fair stranger made upon him was as if here were another flower, the human sister of those vegetable ones, as beautiful as they, more beautiful than the richest of them, but still to be touched only with a glove, nor to be approached without a mask.19

First, piling comparison upon comparison, he ascribes the attributes of the flowers to Beatrice; then writing figuratively of the girl's luxurious beauty, girdled by her virgin zone, he suggests budding ripeness, almost overfulness. Finally, hinting at a personification of the flowers by calling Beatrice their sister, he makes her metaphorically one of them in the phrase, "as if here were another flower." The entire paragraph works to equate Beatrice with the flowers, even to the description of her healthy "bloom," used in its figurative sense. Characteristically, Hawthorne is ambiguous about his suggestions; the reader is uncertain whether the girl has the qualities of the flowers or whether the flowers have the human qualities given to the girl. All the images are interwoven until the reader is conscious only of the emotional suggestion and not of reality.

19Hawthorne's Works, II. 113-114; italics mine.
The conditioned reader unconsciously accepts a simile such as the following uttered by Dame Lisabetta in the same tale: "It is said that [Rappaccini] distills these plants into medicines that are as potent as a charm." Even a careful reader is likely to miss the true comparison. In the real world, potency is in medicine, not in charms, but this is Hawthorne's world of romance, and he subtly connects the mysterious nature of charms with the flowers and their creator. If the reader should notice the reversal immediately, thereby destroying the figurative effect, the phrase still serves as an excellent characterizing device for the old woman who possesses some crone-like qualities herself.

Hawthorne seems always to suggest metaphorical connections without being explicit about whether the actual parallels the imaginative or just the opposite. According to Henry James, Hawthorne's continuous use of emblematic expression is "a kind of small ingenuity, a taste for conceits and analogies . . . ."Certainly, one wonders if the following conceit in "Rappaccini's Daughter" is justifiable: "Up rose the sun in his due season, and, flinging his beams up on the young man's eyelids, awoke him to a sense of pain." The reader is surprised to discover

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20 Ibid., II, 110.
22 Hawthorne's Works, II, 132.
later that the pain is in Giovanni's right hand and not in his eye, where, noting the sun's violent actions, the reader expects it to be.

Hawthorne's real power with figurative language lies in his more subtle use of words and phrases. James F. Ragan notes Hawthorne's use of words to "emblematize the moral state."23 He suggests that

... when Hawthorne describes the past as coarse, rude, or gross, he describes its moral state. But ... he applies the metaphor literally so that grossness ("morally coarse," definition three, American College Dictionary) becomes symbolized in Hawthorne's art by physical grossness ("large, big, or bulky," definition four).24

Ragan bases his statements on the Pyncheon corpulence in The House of the Seven Gables, but an analogous metaphor is used to describe Aminadab in "The Birthmark." The assistant's face is grimy with soot, writes Hawthorne, who adds almost unnecessarily: "With ... the indescribable earthiness that incrusted him, he seemed to represent man's physical nature ... ."25 The "indescribable earthiness" has been doubly described; Aminadab is both incrusted with dirt, and through Hawthorne's agency, incrusted with symbolism of man's earthy nature.

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24 Ibid.
Effective also is Hawthorne's use of transferred epithets, particularly those which ascribe the faculty of one sense organ to something actually perceived by another, that is, synaesthesia. Illustrating the latter technique are two descriptive phrases from "Young Goodman Brown": "... the fire shot redly forth..." and "the smile of welcome gleamed darkly on every visage."\(^{26}\) The adverbial use of color denotes an action which is physically impossible. But the effect of flames shooting out could easily be one of redness; therefore, Hawthorne uses his habitual adverb to name a quality also. A similar usage is evident in the smiles which gleam "darkly." The paradox of a dark gleam further suggests the horror of the scene Brown is witnessing. Such economy of wording is surprising to those readers who accept W. C. Brownell's contention that "nothing is ample in his writings but the plethora of detail and the fulness of fancies."\(^{27}\) Hawthorne certainly achieves "fulness" with his transferred epithets, using the method often enough to make it a marked feature of his style.

By transferring modifiers in this way, Hawthorne is once again heightening effects by packing ideas and emotional suggestion into each phrase. For example, when he describes


"the vestal muslin of a cap" on a maiden's head, he indicates her humble station with the word muslin and her virgin innocence together with a certain spirituality with the word vestal. When he writes of "the marble paleness of Georgiana's cheek," he alludes to the whiteness and coldness of marble, but he also suggests the hardness of a dead statue, thus foreshadowing her death with the phrase. The ugly Aminadab utters "misshapen tones"; the gray champion stands "in gray but unbroken dignity." The old couple in "The Hollow of the Three Hills" sit before their melancholy hearth, denoting sadness, but in conjunction with hearth creating an image of a dying fire, unnatural because of the normal association of hearth with home and accompanying happiness and warmth.

Such "portmanteau" phrases are common in Hawthorne, but since they avoid the obviousness of simile or personification, they are unobtrusive, almost covert methods of enriching the ideas of the tales.

Several scholars comment on the figurative use to which Hawthorne puts one element of setting, the time of the tale.

30 Ibid., II, 59.
31 Hawthorne's Works, I, 27.
32 Ibid., I, 230.
Terence Martin describes Hawthorne's habitual use of twilight settings as a means of evoking the atmosphere of a "neutral territory" for his fiction. Walter Blair notes that Hawthorne writes often "of the imaginative process as a picturing—a use of light to modify actuality." A glance at Hawthorne's settings provides overwhelming testimony to his frequent use of a half-lighted setting:

Such were the colonists of Merry Mount, as they stood in the broad smile of sunset around their venerated Maypole.

One afternoon in April, 1680, Sir Edmund Andros and his favorite Councillors, being warm with wine, assembled the red-coats of the Governor's Guard, and made their appearance in the streets of Boston. The sun was near setting when the march commenced.

On the evening of the autumn day that had witnessed the martyrdom of two men of the Quaker persuasion...

One afternoon of a cold winter's day...

One afternoon, when the sun was going down...

Harold Orel, in a discussion of the "double symbols" of light and time in Hawthorne, explains Hawthorne's use of

light as a figurative device. He asserts that, to the
romanticist, light is a "garment of the spirit"; as the light
fades, essence is revealed. 40 L. Moffit Cecil regards the
figurative use of light in Hawthorne's work, not so much as a
symbolic clothing, but as a point of view. When daylight
diminishes or is distorted in Hawthorne's tales, according
to Cecil, the power of the character's sensory eye is pro-
portionately lessened, and the imaginative "eye" takes over. 41
Such theories support the view that Hawthorne uses light
figuratively in his settings to suggest the unreality of the
tales. Hawthorne evidently hopes that his reader's
"imagination eye" will usurp the power of his real sense
organ for the duration of the story, at least.

Scholars often note Hawthorne's use of imagery and
symbolism, for in these features of his style, the "fashion"
and the "material" of the romances merge. Most often, critics
concern themselves with the meaning of specific symbols, but
a few join Wagoner in remarking Hawthorne's technical
handling of symbols and suggestion: "Hawthorne saw the Gestalt
of the actions he presented"; beginning with a "simple pattern
of action," noting its implicit meaning, Hawthorne saw

40 Harold Orel, "The Double Symbol," American Literature,
XXIII (March, 1951), 5.

41 L. Moffitt Cecil, "Hawthorne's Optical Device,"
American Quarterly, XV (Spring, 1963), 79-80.
qualifications and repetitions of it everywhere. When Hawthorne transfers these reiterations of meaning to his prose in the form of symbols and imagery, a distinct pattern of "multitudinousness" emerges. Maurice Charney believes that symbolic motifs in Gothic architecture, which Hawthorne admired, are analogous to Hawthorne's artistic technique:

One may, I think, posit a certain unity in Hawthorne's sense of style, and it is not surprising that he should have tried to achieve in his romances qualities that moved him so deeply in gothic churches, or that he should have seen in these churches stylistic qualities that he admired as a romancer. He was most powerfully impressed by the multitudinousness of the gothic style--this is one of his key words--its ability to fashion a wealth of detail into a rich and full organic whole.

Hawthorne himself recognizes the technique for achieving this effect of repetition and variation, commenting, "a majesty and a minuteness, neither interfering with the other; each assisting the other; this is what I love in Gothic architecture." Hawthorne manages his images and symbols in the same manner; some he writes large--maypoles, witches' meetings, lime-kilns, pink ribbons--others he merely touches on in minute details--an allusion, a simile, a phrase in dialogue.

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44 Ibid., p. 39.
M. H. Bonham agrees that symbolism... was at the marrow of Hawthorne's creative genius. So fundamental was this tendency in Hawthorne that under the magic of his pen any sensible object in the story might from time to time slip into the symbol role, pointing up an incident, a character, an atmosphere with little or no awareness on the part of the average reader of its fulfillment of this second function.46

To Bonham, such a technique is more effective than the use of full-blown symbols, but not to Herbert Read. He calls the stylistic habit "oblique reference," saying that

... this phenomenon is the same in all American writers: they walk all round the circumference of a subject and imagine they have been at the centre.47

"Oblique reference" seems to serve Hawthorne's romances well, however, creating mood and suggestion without intruding obviously upon the narrative.

The opening paragraphs of "Rappaccini's Daughter" evidence Hawthorne's technical method of preparing for his majestic symbols through the use of minute or nascent images. In these passages, he constructs an implicit answer to the question he asks at their conclusion: "Was this garden, then, the Eden of the present world?"48 Although the first paragraph is essentially expository, Hawthorne's use of a literary allusion begins the author's series of suggestions which build to

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48 Hawthorne's Works, II, 112.
symbols later in the tale:

The young stranger, who was not unstudied in the great poem of his country, recollected that one of the ancestors of this family, and perhaps an occupant of this very mansion, had been pictured by Dante as a partaker of the immortal agonies of his Inferno.49

Giovanni sighs at the recollection, causing the old servant to exclaim, "Holy Virgin, signor! . . . For the love of heaven, then, put your head out of the window, and you will see as bright sunshine as you have left in Naples."50 "Holy Virgin" in its context is simply the characteristic exclamation of an old Italian woman, as is "For the love of heaven," but following so closely the reference to the Inferno, they take on a wider dimension in meaning. When Giovanni looks out, he sees that the Paduan sunshine "fell upon a garden beneath the window and expended its fostering influences on a variety of plants, which seemed to have been cultivated with exceeding care."51 Although only three short paragraphs into the narrative, Hawthorne has alluded to damnation, salvation, and innocence by explicitly mentioning Inferno, Heaven, and a garden. At this point they are not fully developed symbols, certainly, but symbols a-borning. Thus, as Waggoner declares, Hawthorne establishes his image patterns early, giving clues to basic meanings and prominent images at the beginning.52

49Ibid., II, 109.  
50Ibid., II, 109-110.  
51Ibid., II, 110; italics mine.  
52Waggoner, p. 175.
Hawthorne continues reiterating the same three motifs in the passage leading up to his important question:

... commending the young man to the protection of the Saints . . . .

... one of those botanic gardens which were of earlier date in Padua than elsewhere in Italy or in the world.

... it might once have been the pleasure-place of an opulent family . . . .

... as if the fountain were an immortal spirit . . . .

... some plants crept serpent-like along the ground . . . .

... it seemed as if Bappaccini was looking into their inmost nature, making observations in regard to their creative essence . . . .

... cultivating a garden, that most simple and innocent of human toils, and which had been alike the joy and labor of the unfallen parents of the race. Was this garden, then, the Eden of the present world?53

No matter how skeptically the reader hears this deceptively naive question with his conscious ear, his imagination is solemnly answering affirmatively because of the multitude of suggestions Hawthorne has offered him. Hawthorne's tales are incrusted with such symbolic suggestion just as Aminadab is incrusted with the earthiness of man's physical nature.

Q. D. Leavis warns that

There are no irrelevancies in Hawthorne's best works and when we seem to find one it should be read with particular care as it will undoubtedly turn out to be structural.54

Leavis limits her praise to Hawthorne's "best work," for when

54 Leavis, p. 441.
his reiteration and suggestion of symbols is successful, it works admirably, as in "Rappaccini's Daughter," because Hawthorne continues to develop the images he establishes early in the tale. The spiritual fountain water, for example, develops as a symbol when Hawthorne later depicts it nourishing the plants, serving as the site for Beatrice and Giovanni's trysts, and assuming more and more an association with Beatrice's soul. In this and similar situations he accomplishes what George Woodberry believes to be Hawthorne's greatest achievement: the successful blending of image and idea.55

55George Woodberry, Nathaniel Hawthorne: How to Know Him (Indianapolis, 1918), p. 74.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Roy R. Male writes that Hawthorne's real strength can never be revealed by a study of fictional techniques. But the romanticist indicates in his preface to The House of the Seven Gables that "fashion" and "material" are the two elements involved in the creation of romance which demand "a certain latitude" if the narratives are to be believed. Since Hawthorne himself asked leave to fashion romance, a study of his stylistic technique in doing so should be only one more revelation of Hawthorne's strength. Indeed, all elements of the author's style contribute to the creation of that far-away land which Hawthorne thought to be the only one congenial to the setting of his fiction. The present study has examined as many techniques as possible—diction, syntax, devices which prepare and sustain the fairy land, and imagery and symbols—in the light of their functionality in the tales.

With the evident intention of making each word carry as much meaning as possible, Hawthorne chooses a great many borrowed words and selects the words of native origin in his prose for their abstract rather than concrete denotations.

1 Male, p. 6.
Such a high proportion of borrowed words helps to give his prose an intellectual tone, to suggest abstractions rather than realities to the reader. In addition, the level of the author's language is decorously literary. Although employing colloquial speech for specific effects in some of the tales and using an occasional archaism whenever the exigencies of euphony or meaning demand them, Hawthorne most often selects words and phrases from formal literary and poetic diction. Such usage gives his diction the quality of stateliness which tends to slow the narrative for a concentration on meaning instead of action.

Hawthorne further achieves his meditative pace by choosing words which elicit emotional reactions through connotation and euphony. By using diction not to describe but to suggest, the romanticist makes the reader supply a goodly portion of the meaning of the tale for himself. Connotative language and euphonic prose evoke emotions in the individual reader which allow him to supply his own imagery even though Hawthorne always controls those images through a skillful choice and arrangement of words.

Not only does the author choose his diction to stimulate intellectual and emotional responses, but he also structures his sentences so that they call for the reader's total involvement in the meaning of the narrative. By stressing the quality of things through syntactical stimuli, such as
periodic structure, the passive voice in verbs, and inverted word order, Hawthorne consistently achieves a contemplative tone. In his best tales, Hawthorne constructs his sentences to intensify his meaning by giving them the same structure that the tale is based on, such as the balanced pairs in "The Maypole of Merry Mount" and the circular arrangements in "Ethan Brand."

Although in diction and syntax he calls for the participation of the reader in communication of intellectual meaning and emotional tone, Hawthorne provides a storyteller persona who both "fastens" the story somewhere and introduces the fantasy world of the tales. From elaborate framework sketches to simple fairy-tale beginnings, his formal introductory devices serve to transport the reader from reality to unreality and to prepare him for the acceptance of the marvelous narratives. Additionally, Hawthorne uses omniscient or first-person point of view so that his storyteller voice will always exert some control over the tale, intruding for moralistic or facetious comments as the author feels inclined.

The study of Hawthorne's technical handling of imagery and symbolism reveals that the romancer takes pains to prepare for them through allusion, figurative language, and suggestion even before their symbolic significance is consciously recognized. He peoples his prose with qualities
and ideas through personification, merges image with idea through metaphor and simile, and builds symbolic importance with repeated analogy.

One cannot review closely Hawthorne's stylistic techniques without appreciating their aid in the creation of his fictional "Faery Land." Although a study of the technical elements of his style does not alone reveal Hawthorne's full strength, such a work contributes to the understanding of Hawthorne as an artist, illustrates the care with which the author "fashioned" his fairy land, and reveals that Hawthorne relies a great deal on the separate elements of style to enrich and reiterate his meaning.
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