NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE'S SKETCHES: DEFINITION, CLASSIFICATION, AND ANALYSIS

THESIS

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Nathaniel Hawthorne's sketches, as distinguished from his tales, fall into three main types: the essay-sketch, the sketch-proper, and the vignette-sketch. A definition of these works includes a brief discussion of their inception, source, and development, and a study of the individual pieces as representative of types within each of the three main divisions.

A consideration of the sketches from their inception through their final form reveals a great deal of the formative process of some of Hawthorne's ideas of literature and of the development of specific techniques to cope with his themes. A study of the sketches as a group and individually provides a clearer basis for a study of Hawthorne's other works.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Nathaniel Hawthorne's shorter narrative works form an important area for consideration as a step in the development of the American short story. Many of Hawthorne's most famous tales, "My Kinsman, Major Molineaux" and "Young Goodman Brown," for example, are easily recognized as completely unified and distinctly whole artistic creations capable of standing on the merits of their fully developed plot structures and the details of characterization, narrative flow, and neatly-tied conclusions of the modern short story genre. Many of Hawthorne's short works, however, do not fit into this short story or "tale proper" category. Hawthorne often referred to these works merely as "articles"; however, more distinct labelling appears justifiable upon closer examination. An analysis of his works' early acceptance, a study of the sources from which he drew his materials, and a close look at the methods through which the individual sketches (as classified into the groups of essay, sketch proper, and vignette sketch) achieve their specific goals will define the sketch as a unique contribution to American literature.

A survey of the opinions that Hawthorne's works first met with reveals that the acceptance of the sketch as Hawthorne

wrote it was slow in coming. Early critics praised Hawthorne's originality; a few of them analyzed his work and appreciated its uniqueness, but the general reception of his work was, as Hawthorne admitted, restrained. Furthermore, Hawthorne's own analysis of his early sketches reveals an increasing concern over their acceptance and a continual striving for a fit medium for the themes and effects he was concerned with presenting. Chapter one of this study, "Definition of the Sketch and Distinction from the Tale Proper," delineates the progress of Hawthorne's first works, including contemporaneous critical reviews and Hawthorne's own estimation of the success of the sketches. This chapter also seeks to define the sketch, using Poe's definition of the tale proper as a basis for definition, and to differentiate it from the short story.

Chapter two, entitled "Development of Style: Precedents, Influences, and Innovation," deals with various influences on Hawthorne's work, tracing sources and briefly discussing the biographical factors involved in Hawthorne's development as a writer. A brief survey of his study and admiration of earlier literary figures, an analysis of his experiences as editor, a recognition of the extent to which his travels influenced his writing, and a look at his personal notebooks as depositories of ideas recorded at various stages of his life comprise an adequate background for the sources of Hawthorne's sketches.

Chapters three, four, and five deal with individual sketches as representative of the three main types of sketches that Hawthorne wrote. Discussion of selected sketches within each group reveals the diversity of materials found in these works, and illustrates Hawthorne's ability to utilize many techniques when working with various themes and subjects.

A complete survey of these short works--from their sources and inception through their final forms--illustrates and defines Hawthorne's sketches as a viable and diffuse category of writing worthy of greater emphasis.

CHAPTER II

DEFINITION OF THE SKETCH AND DISTINCTION FROM THE TALE PROPER

Nathaniel Hawthorne's tales and sketches comprise an important facet of his art. The diffuseness of technique and variety of style that Hawthorne later was to master in his longer fiction is evidenced in the carefully-wrought, concise statements of these early works. More than being a mere proving ground for Hawthorne's style, however, the tales and sketches are replete with a unique, tranquil beauty and a quality of expression all their own. Too often overlooked in favor of the more illustrious stories, these early tales and sketches are worthy of study as an integral part of the canon of Hawthorne's work.

When he wrote the preface to the third edition of Twice-Told Tales in 1851, Hawthorne was able to assess the value of his early work dispassionately and objectively. He quite realistically acknowledges in the preface the weaknesses found in his early sketches and tales, but this acknowledgement is coupled with the favorable reminiscences associated with the period of his life when he was composing them, as well as a recognition that these works represented an important phase both in his life and in his development as an author.

He says of the tales and sketches: "They are the memorials of very tranquil and not unhappy years. They failed, it is true, --nor could it have been otherwise,--in winning an extensive popularity."[1]

Hawthorne admits that the value of the pieces has not been proved either by an overwhelming public acceptance or by their ability to create a stir among literary critics. However, the author regards the success that the sketches had for him as more important than any ephemeral popularity they might have enjoyed. Hawthorne concludes his analysis of the Twice-Told Tales by saying that

> these volumes have opened the way to most agreeable associations, and to the formation of imperishable friendships; and there are many golden threads interwoven with his present happiness, which he can follow up more or less directly, until he finds their commencement here; so that his pleasant pathway among realities seems to proceed out of the Dreamland of his youth, and to be bordered with just enough of its shadowy foliage to shelter him from the heat of the day. He is therefore, satisfied with what the 'TWICE-TOLD TALES' have done for him, and feels it to be far better than fame.(pp. 18-19)

Here Hawthorne justifies the rather quiet reception of the Tales by underscoring the importance that he feels the tales and sketches had for him in his early years as an author.

At the time this preface was written in 1851, the same year that the Snow-Image and Other Twice-Told Tales was

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[1] Preface to Twice-Told Tales, The Complete Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, with Introductory Notes, ed. George Parsons Lathrop, Riverside Edition (1883; rpt. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1914), I, 11-19. All subsequent references to Hawthorne's Works are to this edition and will be cited in the text.

published, Hawthorne had virtually completed his experimentation with short fiction. Since the ill-fated "Seven Tales of My Native Land" series, which Hawthorne had written some time around his graduation from Bowdoin College (1825), and which he subsequently burned after their repeated failure to be accepted by a publisher, he had written many sketches and stories which had appeared either anonymously or pseudonymously in the periodicals of the day. The first edition of Twice-Told Tales in 1837 and the enlarged edition of 1842, as well as the Mosses from an Old Manse collection in 1846, had gleaned from old annuals, giftbooks, and newspapers, tales and sketches that Hawthorne had been writing since before the appearance of "The Hollow of the Three Hills" in the Salem Gazette in 1830.

By the time Hawthorne wrote the preface to this last collection of tales and sketches (1851), he was secure enough in his opinion of his work to look back upon the first appearances of the tales with mild humor. In giving himself the distinction of having been "the obscurest man of letters in America" (I, 13), Hawthorne attributes his lack of fame in part to the motives behind his writing. Since he admits that "he had no incitement to literary effort in a reasonable prospect of reputation or profit, nothing but the pleasure itself of composition" (I, 13), the reader may assume that in composing these tales and sketches, Hawthorne was experimenting with literary techniques in an effort to define his own distinctive style.

In analyzing his past efforts at composition with piercingly clear insight, Hawthorne writes that due to the "total lack of sympathy" (I, 14) he feels that he met with in his pioneering stage as an author, "the Author can show nothing for the thought and industry of that portion of his life, save the forty sketches, or thereabout, included in these volumes [editions of Twice-Told Tales]"(I, 14). He sardonically admits here that some of his sketches and tales had been previously doomed to a fate more "brilliant" than that of the articles that appeared in print; that "in a word, the Author burned them without mercy or remorse, and moreover, without any subsequent regret" (I, 14). Hawthorne even marvels "that such very dull stuff, as he knew his condemned manuscripts to be, should yet have possessed inflammability enough to set the chimney on fire!" (I, 14).

Hawthorne's ability to discriminate the value of his early efforts is clarified in this same preface. The author feels that "after so many sober years, he would have reason to be ashamed if he could not criticize his own work as fairly as another man's" (I, 15). In a famous description of his own tales and sketches, Hawthorne proceeds to comment on Twice-Told Tales in just this disassociated manner:

> They have the pale tint of flowers that blossomed in too retired a shade, --the coolness of a meditative habit, which diffuses itself through the feeling and observation of every sketch. Instead of passion there is sentiment; and, even in what purport to be pictures of actual life, we have allegory, not always so warmly

> dressed in its habiliments of flesh and blood as to be taken into the reader's mind without a shiver. Whether from lack of power, or an unconquerable reserve, the Author's touches have often an effect of tameness; the merriest man can hardly contrive to laugh at his broadest humor; the tenderest woman, one would suppose, will hardly shed warm tears at his deepest pathos. The book, if you would see anything in it, requires to be read in the clear, brown, twilight atmosphere in which it was written; if opened in the sunshine, it is apt to look exceedingly like a volume of blank pages. (I, 16)

Hawthorne was not alone in the critical appraisal of his work. Leading literary critics and popular authors of the day could appreciate the value of Hawthorne's first sketches and tales, for they could sense the originality of his work and were able to look beyond the occasionally rough exterior of these first literary offerings to the fresh impression and novel themes that they expressed.

The reception that the tales and sketches received from the literati of the day is evidenced by an early review attributed to Evert Augustus Duyckinck which appeared in the May 1841 edition of Arcturus. Duyckinck writes,

> In his own peculiar walk of fiction and sentiment, there is perhaps no author in English literature who could supply to us the few natural beautiful sketches of Nathaniel Hawthorne. Of the American writers destined to live, he is the most original, the one least indebted to foreign models or literary precedents of any kind, and as the reward of his genius he is the least known to the public.[2]

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[2] Arcturus, 1 (May, 1841), 330. Bertha Faust, in Hawthorne's Contemporaneous Reputation (1939; rpt. Folcroft, Pa.: The Folcroft Press, 1969), provides an in-depth survey of the reviews Hawthorne's first tales received.

Duyckinck laments Hawthorne's obscurity, but adds,

> It need be no cause of regret to the friends of Hawthorne that he is not popular in the common acceptation of the word, for popularity is not essential to his success. He has written, not because others admire, but because he himself feels. His motive was from within. . . . The writings of Hawthorne can bear the delay of favor, they cannot perish, for they spring from the depths of a true heart. (p. 331)

Although Hawthorne's works had not yet been enthusiastically embraced by the public, Duyckinck saw the merit of the tales and sketches as based on their sincerity and originality of expression.

An early anonymous reviewer both defined Hawthorne's Twice-Told Tales (1842 edition) and praised the individual pieces:

> His writings, half tale and half essay, are unique in their form and language. The most engaging simplicity,--in which art wholly conceals the art,--the truest purity of thought and feeling, a warm and kind moral sense, and a polished ease of sentiment and expression, are their constant characteristics.[3]

Again, the value of the sketches comes through to this early critic, whose opinions have, in effect, come to be accepted sentiments in treating Hawthorne's works.

Longfellow reviewed Twice-Told Tales for the North American Review in April, 1842, and while finding the work not destined for a "tumultuous popularity," adds that "their tranquil

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[3]"Review of Twice-Told Tales," Boston Miscellany of Literature and Fashion, 1 (Feb. 1842), 92. Attributed by Faust to Nathan Hale, Jr., in Hawthorne's Cont. Rep., p. 41.

beauty and softened tints, which do not win the notice of the restless many, only endear them the more to the thoughtful few." Longfellow saw Hoawthorne as an uncommonly successful writer in the respect that his tales and sketches transcend the common taste; moreover, he predicted their endurance, for "the pulse of genius beats vigorously through them, and the glow of life is in them."[4]

Melville believed that the beauty of Hawthorne's tales and sketches was in the adaptation of the style of writing to the expression of his specific, but universally applicable, meanings. F. O. Matthiessen discusses Melville's appreciation of Hawthorne's genius in relation to Melville's own literary tenets.

> He became fully aware that there can be no authentic style unless it has been created by a meaning, by a close response to the complexity of existence. He was sure that Hawthorne's sketches, with their delicate revelations of human nature, could not have been produced by any mere technical skill. "They argue such a depth of tenderness, such a boundless sympathy with all forms of being, such an omnipresent love, that we must needs say that this Hawthorne is here almost alone in his generation--at least, in the artistic manifestation of these things."[5]

Melville could appreciate the emboidment of a worthy idea in a

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[4] North American Review, 54 (April, 1842), 496-499.

[5] Francis Otto Matthiessen, American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1941), p. 190.

commonplace setting even if the mechanics of the piece seemed slightly inadequate. This seems to be true of the other complimentary critics as well; these admirers of Hawthorne enjoyed the success of the idea and treatment while allowing for the relative inexperience of the author.

Aside from the general rejoicings at Hawthorne's ability to embody an idea with form, few critics were able to analyze Hawthorne's works on the merits of style or technique. Because what he was doing with short fiction was virtually without precedent, Hawthorne's early works tended to be the initial or preparatory movements toward a more distinctive style, both for Hawthorne and for the short story genre in general.

Almost forty years later (in 1887), Henry James saw the value of the Twice-Told Tales and was able to put the sketches and tales in perspective. Commenting on the oft-quoted assertion made by Hawthorne that the early tales were an attempt "to open an intercourse with the world," James notes, "We are speaking here of small things, it must be remembered--of little attempts, little sketches, a little world. But everything is relative, and this smallness of scale must not render less apparent the interesting character of Hawthorne's efforts."[6] James is able to appraise the sketches on their rather limited scale rather than judging them in comparison to other works. James perceived the rare beauty of the smaller pieces, even

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[6] Henry James, Hawthorne (1887; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1968), p. 55.

to the point of wishing that he could read them for the first time again,

> before the particular Hawthorne quality, as it may be called, had become an established, a recognized and valued, fact. Certainly, I am inclined to think, if one had encountered these delicate, dusky flowers in the blossomless garden of American journalism, one would have plucked them with a very tender hand; one would have felt that here was something essentially fresh and new; here, in no extraordinary force or abundance, but in a degree distinctly appreciable, was an original element in literature.[7]

Other critics realized that Hawthorne's work was original; James found beauty in the "small things"; but Edgar Allan Poe was the first critic to make a profoundly analytical appraisal of Hawthorne's work. Poe's review of Twice-Told Tales, which appeared in two consecutive issues of Graham's Magazine (in April and May of 1842), reveals some important distinctions concerning Hawthorne's tales and sketches.[8]

Poe was the first to distinguish between Hawthorne's essays and sketches and his tales proper. In his review "Hawthorne, Twice-Told Tales" Poe's penchant for exact labelling is illustrated in his initial criticism of the title of the volume:

> Mr. Hawthorne's volumes appear to us misnamed in two respects. In the first place they should not have been called 'Twice-Told Tales'--for this is a title which will not bear repetition. If in the first collected edition they were twice-told, of course now they are

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[7] Ibid., p. 56.

[8] Graham's Magazine, 20 (April, 1842), 254 and 20 (May, 1842), 298-300.

> thrice-told.--May we live to hear them told a hundred times! In the second place, these compositions are by no means all 'Tales.' The most of them are essays properly so called. (April, 1842), p. 254.

Poe admires Hawthorne's "essays," as he distinguishes some of the sketches from what he calls the "tale proper," on their own merits, although he admits that the "essays are not so markedly novel" as the tale proper in their effectiveness or success. Of the essays he says in the May edition of Graham's:

> They are each and all beautiful without being characterized by the polish and adaptation so visible in the tale proper. A painter would at once note their leading or predominant feature, and style it repose. There is no attempt at effect. All is thoughtful, quiet, subdued. (p. 298)

Poe then goes on to elaborate on the tale proper, discussing what its aim, subject, and effect should be. His praise for Hawthorne in connection with his originality in writing tales of this type is high:

> Of Mr. Hawthorne's tales we would say, emphatically, that they belong to the highest region of Art--an Art subservient to genius of very lofty order. . . We know of few compositions which the critic can more honestly commend than these 'Twice-Told Tales.' As Americans, we feel proud of the book. (p. 299)

Poe's acceptance of Twice-Told Tales as a uniquely American production is interesting, but his distinctions between the tale proper (which he felt Hawthorne capable of writing) and the essay or sketch are more important in relation to an understanding of Hawthorne's short fiction and his acceptance as an author of merit. Poe was the first to appraise Hawthorne's work on a basis of stylistic categories.

If, as Fred Lewis Pattee maintains, "a study of fifty or more sketches and tales in the best sequence we now possess is the necessary preliminary approach to Hawthorne," then more distinct labelling is justifiable. Pattee states that this initial fifty pieces could be almost evenly divided into two volumes--one of sketches and one of tales. In his further subdivision of the sketches, Pattee envisions three sections entitled "Historical Sketches," "Travel Sketches," and "Studies in Personality."[9]

Pattee feels that the sketch is one of Hawthorne's favorite mediums, stating that Hawthorne "was most at home in the sketch, the rambling essay type of reminiscent description, as in 'The Old Manse.'"[10] A study of the sketch as a successful form in itself is important in forming an understanding of the impact of Hawthorne's short fiction on the literary world: its reception on first appearance, its effect on the progress of the short fiction genre, and its relevance to a study of Hawthorne today.

The general term "sketch" is most often used to refer to those pieces which cannot be called tales or stories due to their undeveloped plots or incomplete evolution of character,

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[9] Development of the American Short Story (New York: Harper and Bros., 1923), p. 99.

[10] Ibid., p. 107.

or due to their reliance on a factual framework rather than a totally fictional one. The sketches, moreover, may be subdivided into three main groups which better enable the reader to identify and study them. These groups are the sketch proper, the essay-sketch, and the vignette or borderline tale.

The sketch proper may be defined as those short fictional pieces where the moral, descriptive, and visual imagery take precedence over narration, plot, and development of action or story line, or where the statement of a certain theme or moral is the primary intention of the piece. "Sights from a Steeple" is an example of a sketch which is based on fact but which is highly embellished by the author's imagination in an attempt to convey a distinct impression, and perhaps to dramatize a theme, for the reader. "Sights from a Steeple" uses the vehicle of the author's observation of the crowd from a high vantage point to make comments on the passers-by. Certainly not a formally drawn story, this brief sketch is nonetheless important for the almost editorial comments that the author makes through it.

The sketch may also be merely a descriptive analysis of an interesting subject, as in "The Old Apple Dealer." Pattee would classify this sketch as "A Study in Personality," for the author's main intention is to write an external character sketch of an old man that he has seen at the train station

selling apples and confections. Despite the fact that this type of sketch is not as complete as some of the tales, these sketches do present a unified impression of one type or another, and they do reveal an important facet of Hawthorne's artistic ability.

The essay-sketches are expository pieces with no story line. They are primarily descriptive or analytical investigations of a limited subject and on a limited scale. These pieces are usually not fictional; rather they are based upon the author's observations of his environment. "The Old Manse" is perhaps the best known of the essay-sketches. In it the author examines his surroundings and analyzes them with merely a tinge of the imaginative in his description. This type of sketch is often drawn from Hawthorne's personal notebooks and generally contains observations of a personal prejudice or reveals a characteristic attitude toward a certain person, event, or place.

Those sketches designated as vignettes or borderline tales depend upon an almost pictorial description of a specific scene or a vivid actualization of the allegorical presentation of a moral or idea. The vignette is beautiful because of the concise statement of its theme or primary image, and although it is not developed to the extent that the traditional tale is, the vignette does contain a subtle infusion of plot,

characterization, and progressive action. "Main Street" offers an example of this type of sketch. While utilizing certain techniques found in other sketches, this composition also contains traits which belong to the tale proper category. The fusion of these traits produces a piece which is called a sketch, but which has too many tale-like elements to be classified as a sketch proper.

It does not seem realistic to assert that Hawthorne had no conception of literary theory on the basis of the diversity of the work he produced in those early years. Rather, it might be said that through experimenting with different techniques and mediums, he was defining his own strengths and weaknesses as an author in an attempt to seize upon the mode of expression which best suited his individual style. In experimenting with the essay, sketch, vignette, and tale proper, Hawthorne was searching for the ideal vehicle for the presentation of his favorite themes and subjects.

CHAPTER III

DEVELOPMENT OF STYLE: PRECEDENTS, INFLUENCES, AND INNOVATION

When Hawthorne began his experimentation with forms of short fiction previous to his graduation from college in 1825, he had few literary precedents from which to draw. His conception of the "actual" as perceived through the imagery was not new, of course, but his application of it to his favorite themes and his emphasis on certain aspects of fictional situations was largely original--(especially his development of the psychological and motivational interests in individual characters) if not in theory, then in practice. The sketches offer an interesting collection of themes developed in an array of literary forms and based on a diverse background of precedents and influences.

Since, as F. O. Matthiessen has noted, "at the time he began to write, he had no indigenous example upon which to build,"[1] Hawthorne drew more from the European literary masters he had admired and read since childhood than from fellow American authors. Hawthorne's first sketches and tales clearly show the influence that certain figures had upon his work, yet the distinctions that make his work original are clearly in evidence as well. From these sources, however,

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[1] Matthiessen, American Renaissance, p. 200.

Hawthorne meshed and synthesized ideas and forms until finally, drawing upon his own individuality, he created his own separate, distinctive style.

Most biographers would agree that "apart from history, Hawthorne's favorite literature, man and boy, was the writing of Bunyan and Spenser."[2] Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, a household standard in the nineteenth century, and Spenser's The Faerie Queene (supposedly the first book Hawthorne ever bought[3]), were apparently read very closely by Hawthorne when he was a young boy.

Hawthorne's admiration for Pilgrim's Progress is evidenced in what Hawthorne called his own tendency toward "blasted allegory." Many of Hawthorne's works reflect the influence of allegory; in fact, so many of his sketches tend to be allegorical in purpose that they become a category in themselves. Several of the less-known sketches use allegory ("The Seven Vagabonds," "The Sister Years," and the "Threefold Destiny," to cite only three examples), as do many of the tales that Hawthorne is most known for--"Young Goodman Brown," "The Minister's Black Veil," "The Birthmark," and "Rappaccini's Daughter" to mention only a handful.

Hawthorne's "Celestial Railroad," a satire based on Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, shows that Hawthorne was able

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[2] John E. Becker, Hawthorne's Historical Allegory: An Examination of the American Conscience (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1971), p. 3.

[3] George E. Woodberry, Nathaniel Hawthorne (Boston & New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1902), p. 6.

to adapt Bunyan's form--even to point of near parody--to his own message. One critic argues that "while the universality of Bunyan's emblems is strikingly shown by the ease with which they are adapted to the new age of steam, the tale is, as it were, music transposed; the cleverness is Hawthorne's, but Bunyan wrote the piece."[4] This is true to a certain extent, but part of the success of Hawthorne's "translation" lies in his ability to adapt Bunyan's type of allegory to his own purpose--the satirization of modern society, especially its concept of "progress." More than this, however, Hawthorne's ability to contrast Bunyan's well-known subject and composition to the belief and institutions of his own era adds to the merit of the piece. Nevertheless, the sketch is an example of Hawthorne's ability to use an influential predecessor to his own advantage.

The influence of Spenser's Faerie Queene is seen in Hawthorne's use of allegory, as well as in his love of mystical fairy regions of thought and fancy. Often in an effort to relieve himself of a duty to fact, Hawthorne couched his own sketches and tales in ambiguity, or set them in a region outside reality. In sketches like "The Hall of Fantasy," where Hawthorne takes a guided tour of a castle in the air containing statues and busts of famous men of the past who were "kings" in the realm of imagination, he mixes fact with a great deal of "fancy"in an effort to make his musings interesting to the reader. Even in "Young Goodman Brown," perhaps

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[4] Ibid., p. 142.

Hawthorne's most widely-accepted tale, he feels the need to remove himself from a position of having to deal with where fact ends and fantasy begins. By using certain stylistic devices, such as approaching acertain revelation in the story, then concealing it with ambiguity, Hawthorne preserves the mystery of the plot while satisfying the reader's demands for an answer.

Hawthorne tested technique against content in these early pieces, sometimes drawing more from the type of writing that had impressed him as a student, sometimes less, and ultimately using just enough of what his predecessors had furnished him with to enrich his own work, yet leave it intact. Bunyan and Spenser provided bases for the approaches that Hawthorne would take to his own themes and ideas.

As are all artists, Hawthorne was inevitably influenced by all other past literary masters, and his wide reading encompassed Milton and Shakespeare as well as Scott, Bunyan and Spenser. The extent to which he "used" this material in any recognizable form, however, is undeterminable. An early reviewer praised the originality of Hawthorne's work:

> He does not see by the help of other men's minds, and has evidently been more of an observer and thinker, than of a student. He gives us no poor copies of poor originals in English magazines and souvenirs. . . . Whether he writes a story or a sketch, or describes a character or a scene, he employs his own materials.[5]

This praise of Hawthorne's originality was generally mirrored

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[5] North American Review, 54 (April, 1942), 497.

by other American reviewers, for few American authors previous to Hawthorne had been able to break completely away from their European counterparts.

F. O. Mattiessen observes that "the only earlier American writer whose work bore any inner resemblance to Hawthorne's was Brockden Brown (1771 - 1811)."[6] Brown's ability to transform Gothic horror and Romantic imagination into an effective fictional form; "the ability to take the stock trappings of romanticism and to endow them with the genuine horror of tortured nerves,"[7] fit well with Hawthorne's interest in the psychological effects of sin on the individual. In drawing upon Puritan history, or simply in observing the effects of the past on the present, Hawthorne was able to fuse Romantic and Gothic elements with his own technique.

"A Virtuoso's Collection" may offer an example of the Gothic-Romantic influence on Hawthorne's sketches. In this sketch, the author again takes a guided tour--this time of a collection of articles from literary myth and fable. Virtually all of the items in the exhibit are what one would ordinarily think of as imaginary--magic wands, hats, cups, etc., as well as "stuffed" imaginary animals--but they are described in concrete terms as if they actually are on exhibit. At the end of the tour, the author learns that his guide has been the legendary Wandering Jew. The addition of this

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[6] Matthiessen, American Renaissance, p. 201.

[7] Ibid.

knowledge provides the author with an answer to the incredulous collection that he has presented. He can now assert that the whole thing was a dream or a fantasy on his part. The suspense upheld throughout the sketch as well as the interest maintained in the odd collection of memorabilia mark this as only one of Hawthorne's sketches in which the effects of Gothic Romance may be found. Here Hawthorne has incorporated imaginative elements, Romantic elements, and Gothic elements in a successful fusion of the three influences to meet the requirements of his own purpose in the sketch.

A further indication of Hawthorne's interest in the Gothic is seen in his interest in ghost stories. "The White Old Maid," "The Wives of the Dead," and "The Hollow of the Three Hills" are only three examples of Hawthorne's interest in and occasional use of mysterious subjects or treatments of legends. Hawthorne's interest in the supernatural, when coupled with his interest in the effects of the past on the present, offers a striking parallel to some of Brown's Gothic works.

Of other American authors previous to Hawthorne, perhaps Washington Irving offers the closest model for Hawthorne's early work, especially in the sketches. Irving's concern with recreating legends from his own Knickerbocker region in some of his works perhaps suggested to Hawthorne the richness of his New England heritage as a source for subjects. Furthermore, Irving's success with the sketch and essay forms

doubtless influenced Hawthorne's early strivings for a workable medium for his prose.

Pattee discusses Irving's influence on Hawthorne's early choice of form, but more than this, he sees other important parallels between the two men's works:

> That the essay form predominates in the earlier period of Hawthorne's work may be accounted for, perhaps, by the influence of Irving. In none of his pieces may be found direct evidence that Hawthorne had ever seen The Sketch Book, and yet one cannot but feel that the two groups of sketches are very closely related. They are dissimilar only as the two men who wrote them were dissimilar.[8]

The difference between the interest in the two men's sketches may be seen in their differing approaches to literature, according to Pattee:

> Both wrote short studies of men and manners and environment, but Irving was interested primarily in picturesque externals, in the genially human, and in all that makes for romantic sentiment; Hawthorne, on the contrary, would search below the surfaces of life and find morals and motives and spiritual interpretations.[9]

The extent of Hawthorne's use of sources is academic, as is the tracing of certain styles or approaches to their beginning, but effects do seem apparent in some aspects of Hawthorne's work. Terence Martin sums up the question of Hawthorne's use of sources when he observes,

> The question here is not one of 'influence' in any narrow sense; Hawthorne assimilated the mode and moral quality of his favorite writers,

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[8] Pattee, Development of the American Short Story, pp. 99-100.

[9] Ibid., p. 100.

> digested it and made it his own, so that it came to be a pervasive aspect of his work.[10]

Martin shows that Hawthorne drew upon American history, as well as upon the works of Bunyan, Spenser, Milton, Shakespeare, and Scott, and that

> Other writers, such as Swift, Dante, Madame de Staël, and Tieck, had an importance for the genesis of individual tales. But the allegorical and the Gothic traditions of English literature exercised a persistent effect on Hawthorne's creative imagination. When he brought these traditions to bear on the material of Puritanism, the result was allegory transmuted, Gothicism refined. At its best, the result could be 'Young Goodman Brown.'[11]

To whatever extent Hawthorne was influenced by the writers who preceded him, he was never a slave to literary traditions or forms. He used his studies, his experiences, and most of all, his observations as a basis for the direction of his writing. He was able to create from the traditions of the past and from his own observations of the present, uniquely creative forms to serve the themes and motifs that he was concerned with presenting. The originality of the final product is undeniable, for Hawthorne's creative process incorporated facets of his own experience. Arlin Turner observes that Hawthorne

> employed in his works much from his reading, much from life about him, and much from his own experience. After these materials had passed through an amalgamative process in his mind, they were rarely identifiable when they

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[10] Terence Martin, Nathaniel Hawthorne (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1965), p. 31.

[11] Ibid.

> appeared in the action, setting, and characterization of his tales and novels.[12]

The workings of his "amalgamative process" or synthesis of experiences which were influential in the formation of Hawthorne's creative process can be traced to his experiences as editor and contributor to nineteenth-century magazines, through the initiation of his personal notebooks, and through the recurrence of a core of themes that he was to use throughout his career. All of these factors contribute to an understanding of how Hawthorne combined experience with observation in an attempt to create a unique art form.

Most of Hawthorne's sketches had their first publication in the magazines of the day, for this was an era of growing cultural appreciation in America. The fast-growing journals offered the widest and quickest possibilities for the dissemination of ideas at the time. The New England Magazine, The Token, and The Democratic Review are only three of the journals that Hawthorne contributed to. His work gained some recognition because of its appearance in these journals, and his "articles" were widely sought after by publishers, although Hawthorne never really profited from the sale of his early works.

The appearance of Hawthorne's first literary efforts went unannounced and mostly unnoticed. That he was "the obscurest man of letters in America" up until the publication of Twice-Told Tales in 1837 was largely due to the fact that his name

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[12] Arlin Turner, Nathaniel Hawthorne: An Introduction and Interpretation (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1961), p. 109.

did not appear with his work up until that time. As was the custom in the periodicals of the day, Hawthorne's works appear under pseudonyms (such as "Ashley Allen Royce," "Rev. A. A. Royce," and "Oberon"[13]) or else they appeared with no name at all. Once some of his pieces did gain popularity, his work would appear with an advertisement sub-heading, such as 'By the author of the "Gentle Boy,"' or 'By the author of "The Gray Champion,"'[14]

In 1836 Hawthorne went to Boston to edit a magazine, the American Magazine of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge, which he worked on from March through August, assisted by his sister, Elizabeth.[15] This editorship, though of brief duration, doubtless exposed Hawthorne to a variety of diverse subjects and ideas. The germinal ideas for some of Hawthorne's sketches may be found both in his contributions to and in other articles included in this magazine. One example of such a sketch is "Fire Worship," which corresponds in part to a brief entry in the magazine entitled "Fire Worshippers." Here Hawthorne incorporated a factual article into a fanciful, musing essay. Undoubtedly the experience of handling material of such widely diverse nature as would be demanded by a magazine styled a collection of "useful and entertaining knowledge" would aid Hawthorne in seeing the possibilities of a diverse range of

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[13] George P. Lathrop, "Introduction," Twice-Told Tales, p. 11.

[14] Randall Stewart, Nathaniel Hawthorne: A Biography (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), p. 31.

[15] Ibid., p. 32

subjects for his own creative work.

Hawthorne's experiences in finding material for publication in this magazine, as well as his growing penchant for travelling in the New England area and recording his experiences in his notebooks, provided a wealth of subject matter for further sketches. According to Randall Stewart, Hawthorne's travels in New England were instrumental in "recreating his mind, enlarging his knowledge of human nature, and gathering impressions which could be used in his writings."[16] Furthermore, Stewart states that Hawthorne "was making himself indeed the chief literary authority in New England life and manners."[17] These varied experiences were indeed broadening Hawthorne's scope and supplying him boundless possibilities for his work.

Much of the material that Hawthorne wrote after July, 1837, can be studied with an eye to the personal journals extant from that year. The notebooks were to become for Hawthorne a diary-log of his day's events as well as a storehouse for possible literary ideas. Stewart quotes some advice that Hawthorne gave to Horatio Bridge on the subject of journal keeping:

> "Think nothing too trifling to write down, so it be in the smallest degree characteristic. You will be surprised to find on reperusing your journal what an importance and graphic power these little particulars assume."[18]

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[16] Ibid., p. 44.

[17] Ibid.

[18] An unpublished letter in the possession of Miss Marian Bridge Maurice, dated Concord, May 3, 1843, quoted by Randall Stewart, ed., "The Adaptation of Material from the American Notebooks in Hawthorne's Tales and Novels," Introduction, The American Notebooks by Nathaniel Hawthorne (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1932), p. xxii.

Stewart quotes these lines as representative of "Hawthorne's theory of the method and purpose of keeping a journal," [19] and further goes on to show evidence that Hawthorne "reperused" his journals again and again for ideas for the basis of a story or for the characterization or description of a character.

Stewart further maintains that Hawthorne almost continually scanned through his journals for usable material. According to Stewart, an important consideration in studying Hawthorne's creative process is the acknowledgement that he started with the idea or moral of the story, then clothed it with description, characterization, and perhaps plot. The collection of ideas for a single story could cover a period of months or even years. One such example is that of the idea behind the sketch "Earth's Holocaust." In 1840, Hawthorne recorded the statement,

> 'A bonfire to be made of the gallows and of all symbols of evil.'

in 1842, according to Stewart, "the idea had grown by accretion." It then appeared as follows:

> When the reformation of the world is complete, a fire shall be made of the gallows; and the Hangman shall come and sit down by it, in solitude and despair. To him shall come the Last Thief, the Last Prostitute, the Last Drunkard, and other representatives of past crime and vice; and they shall hold a dismal merry-making quaffing the contents of the Drunkard's last Brandy Bottle.'

"Earth's Holocaust," the sketch resulting from a synthesis of these ideas, was published in 1844.[20]

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[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid., p. xxvii.

Of course many of the ideas for sketches and stories were not used on Hawthorne's re-examination. Some examples are the following:

> 'To personify If -- But -- And -- Though --&c.'

and

> 'A person who has all the qualities of a friend, except that he invariably fails you at the pinch.'

These ideas, on later consideration, obviously did not have the endurance or quality of other ideas. The journals were Hawthorne's memoranda to himself; as such, they incorporated every thought that could possibly be implemented in future stories.

"The Old Apple Dealer" and "Browne's Folly" are two sketches which were lifted directly from the journals. Hawthorne rewrote every sentence, however, in composing the final sketches, in order that the sustaining idea of the finished product would remain intact. If it is true, as one critic maintains, that Hawthorne felt that "art presents reality in an idealized form,"[21] then what better source for a sketch is there than actual characterization of people Hawthorne was familiar with? Each of these sketches is, on the whole, unchanged from initial notebook entry to final form because rather than changing the facts as he had initially observed them, Hawthorne embellished them with the structure and trappings of a more developed and meaningful format.

One striking example of how Hawthorne used notebook

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[21] R. K. Gupta, "Hawthorne's Theory of Art," American Literature, 40 (Nov. 1968), 317.

entries in composing sketches is found in the introductory essay to Mosses from an Old Manse entitled "The Old Manse." Here Hawthorne incorporates several descriptive passages from the notebooks into a unified expository effort to characterize life at the Old Manse and to comment on the author's surroundings there. Stewart analyzes the essay paragraph by paragraph in one of his introductory essays to Hawthorne's American Notebooks. Stewart notes a direct correlation between the essay's contents and the entries in Hawthorne's journals from August, 1842, through October, 1844. Of this essay, as well as of "Buds and Bird Voices," Stewart states that

> Hawthorne, with remarkable thrift, managed to utilize practically all of the usable material in the Old Manse journal. . . . Hawthorne's method was doubtless, first, the formulation of a logical plan; then, the selection of relevant passages from the journal; and finally, the skilful interweaving of these passages, together with supplementary material to make the completed essay.[22]

Hawthorne was able to adapt material from his notebooks directly into sketch form, but he was also able to take the germ of an idea and mold it into a suitable sketch or story. Stewart maintains that Hawthorne's motivation for employing this method of composition was that he felt his earliest works were too fanciful. In an effort to make his sketches more realistic, Hawthorne drew upon actual experiences and observations as recorded in the notebooks.

Hawthorne's experiences as editor and contributor to the

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[22] Stewart, "The Adaptation of Material," p. xxxvi.

periodicals of the day as well as his contemplation of experiences and impressions in the every-day world contributed, during this formative, yet creative phase, to the development of certain themes which were to recur again and again in his work. Hawthorne's concern with select themes and modes of expression characterizes his work and makes it unique. The themes that he adopted and consistently dealt with anticipated later literary treatment of psychological nuance and a concern for the "inner" individual unknown in pre-romantic literature. Hawthorne's choice of theme is ultimately based on a romantic-religious-moralistic philosophy of man. His concern is ever with the individual--often the artistically or scientifically-oriented individual--and his trials and temptations.

Within the category of concern for the individual comes concern for the isolation of the outcast--outcast because of sin (especially pride) or because of an artistic or scientific narrowness or because of any other all-consuming obsession which alienates him from mankind. Interest in the isolation of the alienated individual often lies in his attempted reconciliation with the stream of humanity. Further interest lies in the reaction of humanity (society) to the individual.

Most often, complete reconciliation of the individual does not occur. "John Inglefield's Thanksgiving" is one example of such a sketch. Inglefield's eldest daughter, Prudence, who has deserted her family life for a life of sin in the city, returns for Thanksgiving dinner on the anniversary

of her mother's death. Inglefield and his other children are wary at first; then they welcome Prudence back, expecting that she has repented and returned to live a new life. At the end of the story, however, the girl leaves to return to her former life. As she leaves, her father tells her either to stay with his blessing or leave with his curse. An evil smile crosses her face and she leaves, for the effects of her sin have made it impossible for her to be reconciled with her family. In this sketch, isolation is caused by wilful separation and is enhanced by sin. Prudence alienates herself from "normal" society and later finds it impossible to return to her former state. "The Man of Adamant," "Ethan Brand," and "Egotism: or the Bosom Serpent" also have characters whose sin has alienated them from the mainstream of society.

Another theme that deeply interested Hawthorne and which shadows virtually everything he wrote, is his interest in history and the effects of history on the present. A spirit of nostalgia concerning history pervades many of Hawthorne's works. "Old Ticonderoga," for example, consists of a tableaux in which the author conjures up past scenes of action at the site of the now-demolished fort. "Main Street" is a sketch in which a showman presents a diorama of each stage of development of a specific town; "Old News" presents sketches worked around the perusal of newspapers from pre-revolutionary, revolutionary, and post-revolutionary eras.

These musings on the past often contain a subtle criticism

of the present in their understated praise of past heroism. Social comment is included in other semi-historical sketches as well, such as "Time's Portraiture," "The Toll-Gatherer's Day," and "The Sister Years"--only three examples of sketches wherein Hawthorne deals with Time as a vital aspect of life, often deprecating what he felt was the waste of time in his own day.

The effect of the past on the present is an important theme in Hawthorne as well. Although this theme received its fullest development in the romances, where Hawthorne could better develop it, the sketches show that he was working with this idea early in his career. "The Antique Ring" and "Alice Doane's Appeal" are two sketches which reveal a narrator who is eager to involve his audience in historical fact. In "Alice Doane's Appeal," the narrator is recreating the details of events that occurred on Gallow's Hill outside of Salem in 1692. The young man creates the aura of that time so well that his lady companions eventually start crying, which the narrator feels is his greatest victory, since he has made the past affect the present.

Besides the predominance of historical themes and themes that take as their main concern the individual, Hawthorne's works are filled with ideas that reveal a belief in certain changeless things in the universe. First of all, Hawthorne seemed to believe in the ultimate inviolability of the basic nature of man. Even in a character sketch, as in "The Old

Apple Dealer," the narrator must ultimately admit that he knows nothing of the "soul" of the man, no matter how much he may know of his habits and his outward appearance. The sacredness of the individual is preserved in the vignette "Sylph Etherege." In this sketch, a young man attempts to break his fiancée's fanciful spirit; as a result of the violation of the inner sanctum of her dream world, however, the girl dies. A like event occurs in the well-known tale, "The Birthmark," as well, wherein a man, in an attempt to make his wife perfect, violates her individuality. The experiment to perfect his wife's beauty is successful, but his wife dies.

Another theme that seems to relate to Hawthorne's belief in the unchanging qualities of the universe is seen in implications that the natural world is superior to the 'civilized' world and that intuitive knowledge is more trustworthy than intellectual knowledge. "The New Adam and Eve" and "Fire Worship" are examples of sketches that seem to celebrate a more simple, natural existence than that of the nineteenth-century's industrial revolution. The belief in intuitive knowledge over intellectual knowledge can be seen in every sketch where Hawthorne stresses the heart over the mind.

Other themes that are woven throughout Hawthorne's works are the play of fact against fancy, an interest in the supernatural--especially of disturbed spirits prowling the earth;

an interest in a fountain-of-youth type elixir; and an interest in mesmerism or the power of hypnotism as a force of evil. All of these themes are developed in certain pieces or occur as motifs in selected stories.

All of these themes intrigued Hawthorne as is seen by the frequency with which he used each one, reworking and restructuring them many times in an effort to find better expression. The re-appearance of the themes, the use of the notebooks, and the biographical data on Hawthorne all go a long way in revealing his theory and process of creation. But despite the conjectures one might make concerning this data, it is finally very hard to understand how Hawthorne went about creating his art. As one critic has noted,

> The privilege of creation cannot be shared. Hawthorne always kept his artist's activities decently hidden, and when the long awaited impulse manifested itself in him he was merely following his natural bent when he sought to concentrate his energy rather than disperse it in words.[23]

Hawthorne felt that his duty was to translate "fact into symbol, that is, into meaningful facts," according to another critic.[24] Thus he depended on his observations of the 'real' world and he used these observations (as recorded in the notebooks) in his sketches and stories.

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[23] Jean Normand, Nathaniel Hawthorne: An Approach to an Analysis of Artistic Creation, trans. Derek Coltman (Cleveland: Case Reserve Univ. Press, 1970), p. 146.

[24] Hyatt H. Waggoner, Hawthorne: A Critical Study (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1955), p. 38.

The sketches and early tales published anonymously in the journals of the day provided an outlet for Hawthorne's experimentation with forms and ideas. The experience he gained working with these early sketches and publishing them in the journals of the day, as well as his experience as editor and his observations of life around him, as recorded in his notebooks, provided the impetus for the development of his original talent. His literary predecessors offered him examples of writing styles, forms, and techniques; his implementation of these with his own ideas created a new type of American literature.

CHAPTER IV

THE ESSAY-SKETCH

Newton Arvin observes in his introduction to Hawthorne's Short Stories that "if Hawthorne had died in his middle forties --an advanced age for a man of genius--we should know him now not as the author of The Scarlet Letter or any of his other novels but solely as a writer of short stories and tales."[1] Within the collection of Hawthorne's short stories and tales, moreover, several stylistic distinctions differentiate some pieces from others, so that over half of what are normally called "tales" are in actuality sketches and may be discussed on a different critical basis than the tales.

The sketches, the main outlet for his creative expression when he first started writing, served Hawthorne as a vehicle for at least the three types of sketch-writing already mentioned: the essay-sketch, the sketch-proper, and the vignette. The three types of sketches are distinguished from one another as distinctly as the sketch form is distinguished from the tale. Each of the three types has a peculiar style, a suitable organization, and certain characteristic traits that mark it apart from the other two types.

The essay-sketch, as the simplest of the three types, has a distinct style of composition and a unique format that

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[1] Newton Arvin, Hawthorne's Short Stories (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946), p. vii.

obviously separates it from the more creatively-styled sketch-proper and vignette. The essay-sketch, due to its very nature, is loosely, yet never chaotically, organized. The rambling, informal, and impressionistic treatment demanded by a first person narrative makes the essay-sketch seem lax in unity. However, the author always has a specific, pre-arranged purpose in the sketch, and he deals with related subjects in order to build the impression he desires the reader to get.

In "Recollections of a Gifted Woman," for example, in Our Old Home, Hawthorne does not delve directly into the designated subject of the essay; rather he leads into the discussion in an almost surreptitious manner. He initially describes the countryside from Leamington to Stratford-on-Avon, commenting first on the vegetation of the countryside and comparing it to that of America. Next, in observing the cottages and country-people who live in them, Hawthorne notes that one house is so old that "Shakespeare himself, in one of his morning rambles out of his native town, might have seen the thatch laid on" (VII, 118). This aside is one of the first references Hawthorne makes to the actual subject of the essay.

Upon arriving in Stratford-on-Avon, Hawthorne describes his tour of the town, noting a strange sense of disappointment in the aspect of the place. In the chamber where Shakespeare was supposedly born, Hawthorne notes some of his skepticism concerning this fact, as well as many others about Shakespeare's life. He says that "if you peep too curiously into the matter,

you may find the shadow of an ugly doubt on this, as well as most other points of his mysterious life" (VII, 121). All of the facts surrounding Shakespeare's life and death are spoken of as inferior to the impressions that Hawthorne had before he saw Stratford-on-Avon.

Finally, sixteen pages into the essay which purports to be "Recollections of a Gifted Woman," Hawthorne mentions the underlying reason for the sketch thus far:

> I should hardly have dared to add another to the innumerable descriptions of Stratford-on-Avon, if it had not seemed to me that this would form a fitting framework to some reminiscences of a very remarkable woman. (VII, 129)

Thus Hawthorne commences a discussion of his knowledge of Delia Bacon and her theories concerning the authorship of Shakespeare's plays. Although he does not lend any credence to her beliefs, Hawthorne discusses this lady's scholarship sympathetically and in keeping with the tone of his other observations in the essay.

Although the essay deals with a variety of subjects, it does not convey the impression that it is a piece-meal composite of various unrelated observations. Hawthorne logically introduces, from general to specific, and through peripheral detailing, the essay that is to present a poignant reflection of what Hawthorne thought was Miss Bacon's "high and conscientious exercise of noble faculties, which . . . evolved only a miserable error" (VII, 129). The organization of the whole

essay, though apparently rambling at first in its description of Hawthorne's general disappointment at the "tameness" of what was Shakespeare's habitat, effectually leads to a discussion of a woman whose whole life was characterized by disappointments centered around her study of Shakespeare's life.

Besides the rambling, yet somehow coherent organization of Hawthorne's essays by the grouping and relation of a variety of similar subjects, the point of view of the author in the essays contributes to their difference from the other sketches. Usually in these sketches, the author is an objective observer--not indifferent to the subject he is describing, but maintaining a journalistic remoteness and a reliance on visual description to convey an image to the reader. In "Sunday at Home," for example, the narrator does not participate in the services of the church outside his window, yet he describes in minute detail the church on a particular Sunday morning. The narrator does not eye the church with detachment, but feels a longing to be a part of it, once even regretting that he could not join the congregation. In the essay, however, Hawthorne seems to show that he feels his role to be one of observer/reporter, and not participant. In order to write about life, he feels he must remain an alert, yet detached, observer.

In the essay in Our Old Home entitled "Consular Experiences," which purports to describe Hawthorne's duties as consul to Liverpool, Hawthorne states that even in writing about these

experiences, he somehow feels as if they were not his own. He says,

> The same sense of illusion still pursues me. There is some mistake in this matter. I have been writing about another man's consular experiences, with which, through some mysterious medium of transmitted ideas, I find myself intimately acquainted, but in which I cannot possibly have had a personal interest. Is it not a dream altogether? (VII, 56)

Furthermore, Hawthorne enjoins the reader not to read this essay as autobiographical, for he says,

> I never should have written with half such unreserve, had it been a portion of this life congenial with my nature, which I am living now, instead of a series of incidents and characters entirely apart from my own concerns, and on which the qualities personally proper to me could have had no bearing. (VII, 56)

Hawthorne professes that these essays in Our Old Home are a record of "the more external, and therefore more readily manageable" observations he made while in England (VII, 57). The spirit of distance, which sometimes approaches isolation from his subjects, characterizes these essay-sketches, as it does the others, yet Our Old Home is most of all a record of Hawthorne's mingling with the English people. This feeling of being removed from the things he is describing could be attributed to the fact that these essays are written quite a while after the initial observations were recorded in the notebooks, and yet, part of the answer also lies in the style of description employed in the works.

The style of the essays is usually expository, and, for

the most part, descriptive, yet there are elements of other modes of writing which detract from the general dryness of a wholly expository presentation. As mentioned before, Hawthorne is often able to convey the general feeling about a place or person. This is often due to his use of concise imagery to describe a scene or situation.

In "The Old Manse," Hawthorne characterizes the apple trees in his orchard by endowing them with personalities, thus effectively presenting a description of the trees with the added revelation of his attitude toward them:

> There is so much individuality of character, too, among apple-trees that it gives them an additional claim to the objects of human interest. One is harsh and crabbed in its manifestations; another gives us fruit as mild as charity. One is churlish and illiberal, evidently grudging the few apples that it bears; another exhausts itself in free-hearted benevolence. (II, 21)

This free use of personification, as well as other imaginative uses of imagery, marks the essays as more than a cut and dried account of Hawthorne's observations, as will be seen upon closer examination of a few representative essays. Several other traits are characteristic of the essays as a group and will be studied in detail, but generally the main traits of composition are those peculiar to all of Hawthorne's writing.

One of the techniques concerning the use of imagery which seems to be especially effective is the use of fanciful description to embellish fact. This is usually, of course, tied in with the choice of highly imaginative imagery (as in the

description of the color of a stream as a "greenish, goose-puddly hue" (VII, 63)), yet it also occurs on a larger scale in the presentation of the whole subject. In a personification of Winter in "Snow-Flakes," Hawthorne extends the imagery throughout the essay:

> Wrapped in his white mantle, his staff a huge icicle, his beard and hair a wind-tossed snow-drift, he travels over the land, in the midst of the northern blast. (I, 389)

This extended metaphor pervades the entire essay and is used to illuminate the facts Hawthorne is presenting in his description of the snow scene outside his window.

In "The Haunted Mind," Hawthorne's habitual use of metaphoric fancy to embellish fact is shown in the method he uses to describe one's feelings when awakened in the middle of the night:

> Yesterday has already vanished among the shadows of the past; to-morrow has not yet emerged from the future. You have found an intermediate space, where the business of life does not intrude; where the passing moment lingers, and becomes truly the present; a spot where Father Time, when he thinks nobody is watching him, sits down by the wayside to take breath. Oh, that he would fall asleep, and let mortals live on without growing older! (I, 344)

Here Hawthorne has naturally progressed from factual observation to truly fanciful ones, but the effect is unified by the over-riding purpose of the sketch, and the end result is quite successful.

A further trait characteristic of Hawthorne's work in

general and illustrated vividly in the essays is his use of humor. This characteristic humor takes different forms, often appearing as mild sarcasm, irony, self-derision, or humor at the expense of others, either due to their appearance or actions. An example of under-stated, self-directed humor appears in the essay, "My Visit to Niagara," where Hawthorne describes his initial reactions upon arriving at the site of the falls:

> I am quite ashamed of myself here. Not that I ran, like a madman to the falls, and plunged into the thickest of the spray,--never stopping to breathe, till breathing was impossible: not that I committed this, or any other suitable extravagance. On the contrary, I alighted with perfect decency and composure, gave my cloak to the black waiter, pointed out my baggage, and inquired, not the nearest way to the cataract, but about the dinner-hour. (XII, 43)

This type of descriptive humor is so common to the essays, occuring with such frequency in this personal style of writing, that it would seem to be characteristic of Hawthorne's personality in general, and certainly of his attitude and tone in the essays. Certainly many of the entries in the personal journals, especially the English Notebooks, would substantiate Hawthorne's frequent use of humor.

Humor at the expense of others occurs most frequently in Our Old Home, where Hawthorne records more episodes of encounters with others than he generally does in the essays written of American scenes. In "Recollections of a Gifted Woman," Hawthorne describes a scene in Stratford-on-Avon in

just this mildly exaggerated tone:

> Here, too (as so often impressed me in decayed English towns), there appeared to be a greater abundance of aged people wearing small-clothes and leaning on sticks than you could assemble on our side of the water by sounding a trumpet and proclaiming a reward for the most venerable. (VII, 119)

In a discussion of a typical English dowager, Hawthorne doubtless made some enemies:

> She has an awful ponderosity of frame, not pulpy, like the looser development of our few fat women, but massive with solid beef and streaky tallow; so that (though struggling manfully against the idea) you inevitably think of her as made up of steaks and sirloins. When she walks, her advance is elephantine. When she sits down, it is on a great round space of her Maker's footstool, where she looks as if nothing could ever move her. (VII, 66)

This description is typical of the frequent generalizations Hawthorne drew at the expense of the English, but it is also indicative of Hawthorne's honest attempt at the representation of what he saw.

Aside from the entertaining or humorous bent of the essays, these pieces were occasionally used as vehicles for political or socially opinionated statements; more often, however, if there is a didactic tone to one of the essays, it deals with a moral that Hawthorne draws from a situation and presents as an entertaining sidelight. In the essay "Leamington Spa," Hawthorne takes a moral from an observation of some swans who come out of the water to walk on the land. He states that when they come out of the water,

> They look like a breed of uncommonly ill-contrived geese; and I record the matter here for the sake of the moral,--that we should never pass judgement on the merits of any person or thing, unless we behold them in the sphere and circumstances to which they are specially adapted. (VII, 62)

This rather unlikely placement of a moral is typical of other places in the essays, where, if Hawthorne finds a possibility of drawing a lesson from a situation, he does so.

In "Buds and Bird Voices," Hawthorne captures, from an observation of nature, a more profound moral. In discussing the patches of new grass in the otherwise totally dead landscape, Hawthorne observes

> It looks unreal; a prophecy, a hope, a transitory effect of some peculiar light, which will vanish with the slightest motion of the eye. But beauty is never a delusion; not these verdant tracts, but the dark and barren landscape all around them, is a shadow and a dream. Each moment wins some portion of the earth from death to life; a sudden gleam of verdure brightens along the sunny slope of a bank which an instant ago was brown and bare. (II, 172)

Here the moral is less obvious and less didactically stated; nevertheless, it is a moral which Hawthorne proffers to the reader for application in life.

Although Hawthorne consistently finds morals in the observations he makes, he also writes the essays for the entertainment of the reader. In "The Old Manse" Hawthorne reveals that he thinks of the reader as a "guest in the Old Manse and entitled to all courtesy in the way of sight-showing" (II, 14). This personal attitude pervades the essays, giving

them a one-to-one closeness of author to reader.

Of all of the observations that can be made on Hawthorne's essays, perhaps the best one is still Edgar Allan Poe's comment that the over-whelming spirit of the sketches (and this seems especially to apply to the essay-sketches) is a spirit of repose. The purpose of the essays is inextricably tied with their unhurried development and quiet treatment. Perhaps the best illustration of the theory behind this development may be found in Hawthorne's observation in the essay-sketch "About Warwick" in Our Old Home:

> Everybody can appreciate the advantages of going ahead; it might be well, sometimes, to think whether there is not a word or two to be said in favor of standing still, or going to sleep. (VII, 73)

The stylistic traits exhibited in most of the essays provide a basis for distinguishing the essay-sketch in general from the other types of sketches. Use of stylistic devices within the essay-sketches may be studied by grouping the sketches around certain subject categories and revealing the traits unique to those categories, as well as discussing each sketch in terms of its particular originality.

The essay-sketches generally fall into three or four main subject categories. Many of these sketches revolve around Hawthorne's travel experiences and include a historical slant toward the description of the place being described. Some of the essay-sketches deal with domestic subjects interspersed with philosophical musings, while a few center around nature,

and even fewer are character sketches. Each of these subject types may be exemplified through a consideration of representative sketches.

The travel sketches comprise the greatest single body of the essays. Many of these essays are the direct product of the observations Hawthorne made in his travels and recorded in his notebooks, as has been discussed before. These sketches comprise a respectable portion of the essays Hawthorne wrote; yet they are not mere travel memoirs in the usual sense. As is the rule in almost all of Hawthorne's writing, physical description is generally always combined with embellishment, through imagery and other imaginative description, of the strictly literal appearance of a place.

In "Old Ticonderoga," sub-titled "A Picture of the Past," Hawthorne writes an essay which is the product of more than one visit to the site of the now-demolished fort. This essay is based on an actual journey to the site, yet Hawthorne infuses the sketch with an account of his musings there which are of more interest than a mere description of the place would be.

On his first visit to the ruins, Hawthorne states that he is accompanied by a young graduate of West Point who instructs the author as to the factual and historical significance of the battlements and the other remains of the stronghold. Hawthorne, however, is not interested in this aspect of the fortress. He says,

> I saw nothing but confusion in what chiefly interested him; straight lines and zig-zags, defence within defence, wall opposed to wall, and ditch intersecting ditch . . . where my unmilitary glance could trace no regularity the young lieutenant was perfectly at home. (III, 592)

Hawthorne does not see the significance of the scientific or strategic merit of the ruins; rather, he is interested in the "poetry" behind the place. He says in opposition to the "barren" facts that the young soldier related:

> I viewed Ticonderoga as a place of ancient strength, in ruins for half a century; where the flags of three nations had successively waved, and none waved now; where armies had struggled, so long ago that the bones of the slain were mouldered; where Peace had found a heritage in the forsaken haunts of War. (III, 592)

Hawthorne is interested in the nostalgic, humanistic angle of the history of the fort, not the scientific, mathematically precise account of the events that occurred here. Hawthorne muses that a more suitable companion for a visit to the fort would be "a hoary veteran" who could reminesce about the battles that had been waged here. Furthermore, "the old soldier and the old fortress would be emblems of each other" (III, 592). Since such a companion is not available, Hawthorne decides that the next "best [companion] is one's own fancy."

With the inspiration of fancy, therefore, Hawthorne describes the fortress more vividly than a straight accounting of the facts could. In his mind's eye, the author conjures up scenes of past stages in the history of the fort. Rather

than concentrating on the battles and the successive control of the fort, the author sketches scenes of life as they must have been here, starting with the Indians' original possession of the land and proceeding to the French, then to the British, and finally to the Americans who lived and died here.

Hawthorne's dependence on the humanistic rather than the militaristic interests of the fort is shown through the prevalence of description of the almost domestic scenes of fort life. At one point, Hawthorne says, "I tried to make a series of pictures from the Old French War . . . but being at a loss how to order the battle, I chose an evening scene in the barracks, after the fortress had surrendered" (III, 595).

The entire sketch consists of Hawthorne's recounting of his day-dreams about what the fort was like at successive stages in history. Hawthorne says that he is finally called back to reality by the pealing of a bell which causes him to lose the liveliness of his imaginary scene and return to the "gray and weed-grown ruins." He observes that the ruins "were as peaceful in the sun as a warrior's grave" (III, 596). The nostalgic piece ends on the observation of how quickly time and place change:

> Tall trees have grown upon its ramparts, since the last garrison marched out, to return no more, or only at some dreamer's summons, gliding from the twilight past to vanish among realities. (III, 597)

Life has grown out of the death symbolized by the old fort, and the memories that "some dreamer" might have are the only

surviving evidence of what was once reality.

Hawthorne's tendency to describe the factual through imaginative imagery in the travel essays is likewise illustrated in "Sketches from Memory," a series of three short essay-sketches based on a visit to the White Mountains. In the sketch called "The Canal Boat," Hawthorne says, "I was inclined to be poetical about the Grand Canal" (II, 484). Using much the same fanciful approach as he does in "Old Ticonderoga," he uses his imagination advantageously in describing the sights. Examples of Hawthorne's wedding of fact to fancy are seen in the following excerpts from the sketch.

> In my imagination De Witt Clinton was an enchanter, who had waved his magic wand from the Hudson to Lake Erie and united them by a watery highway, crowded with the commerce of two worlds, till then inaccessible to each other. This simple and mighty conception had conferred inestimable value on spots which Nature seemed to have thrown carelessly into the great body of the earth, without foreseeing that they could ever attain importance. I pictured the surprise of the sleepy Dutchmen when the new river first glittered by their doors, bringing them hard cash or foreign commodities in exchange for their hitherto unmarketable produce. (II, 484)
>
> . . .
>
> Behold us then, fairly afloat, with three horses harnessed to our vessel, like the steeds of Neptune to a huge scallop shell in mythological pictures. (II, 485)
>
> . . .
>
> Sometimes we met a black and rusty-looking vessel, laden with lumber, salt from Syracuse, or Genesee flour, and shaped at both ends like a square-toed boot. (II, 485)

All of these examples show Hawthorne's ability to provide a fanciful image in the description of mundane fact.

Besides a sense of nostalgia and the use of fanciful imagery in description of reality, the travel essay-sketches have another trait which crops up occasionally to distinguish this group from the other sketches. Tied in with the desire not only to describe the places he visited but also to describe his emotions upon visiting them is the projection of the author's mood when face to face with a long-anticipated sight. Hawthorne's ability to evoke the feeling in the reader which parallels the feeling the author must have had when recording the sights is praised by Hyatt Waggoner in a discussion of the essay-sketches "My Visit to Niagara" and "Sketches From Memory":

> Their veracity is so transparent, their description of objects and events so patently to be trusted, that one has the sensation of being not in the presence of literature at all but of 'sheer fact.' . . . What distinguishes these descriptive pieces is chiefly the amazing honesty with which they reflect not simply the thing seen--that is after all not so rare an achievement--but the emotion with which it was seen, the aura and quality and meaning and value--or lack of it--of the seeing.[2]

This ability to capture the mood of the place he is visiting is seen in the travel sketch "My Visit to Niagara." Parts of this essay-sketch are exemplary of the feeling of disappointment that Hawthorne often admits when he realizes the discrepancies between his imaginary vision of a sight

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[2] Hyatt Waggoner, Hawthorne: A Critical Study, rev. ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 43.

previous to the visit and the actual appearance of the place of interest. Upon arriving at Niagara Falls, Hawthorne says, "My enthusiasm was in a deathlike slumber" (XII, 43). Later he admits, "Such has often been my apathy, when objects, long sought, and earnestly desired, were placed within my reach" (XII, 43).

This same mood prevails through the travel sketches in Our Old Home. According to Hawthorne, the little church called Kirk Alloway, as described in the essay "Some of the Haunts of Burns," is "inconceivably small, considering how large a space it fills in our imagination before we see it" (VII, 251). In "Up the Thames," Hawthorne describes his emotions at seeing a sea-town called Wapping. In connection with his disenchantment here, he says,

> I should have supposed [Wapping] to be the most tarry and pitchy spot on earth, swarming with old salts, and full of warm, bustling, coarse, homely, and cheerful life. Nevertheless, it turned out to be a cold and torpid neighborhood, mean, shabby, and unpicturesque, both as to its buildings and inhabitants. (VII, 297)

This attitude of disillusionment is perhaps best summed up in the essay "Recollections of a Gifted Woman," where Hawthorne describes his visit to Stratford-on-Avon. Here Hawthorne explains the reasons behind one's disenchantment at seeing a spot long dreamed-of:

> After wandering through two or three streets, I found my way to Shakespeare's birthplace, which is almost a smaller and humbler house than any description can prepare the visitor

> to expect; so inevitably does an august inhabitant make his abode palatial to our imagination, receiving his guests, indeed, in a castle in the air, until we unwisely insist on meeting him among the sordid lanes and alleys of lower earth. (VII, 120)

Other scenes of disillusionment and disenchantment are threaded through the travel essays, yet their abiding tone is not negative. Hawthorne often rejoices in his opportunities to see different places, and he obviously enjoys his travel experiences. Although there may be occasional disagreeable experiences, his general impression is favorable. In "Recollections of a Gifted Woman," he says of the trip from Leamington to Stratford:

> In short, I recollect nothing specially remarkable along the way, nor in the immediate approach to Stratford; and yet the picture of that June morning has a glory in my memory, owing chiefly, I believe, to the charm of the English summer-weather, the really good days of which are the most delightful that mortal man can ever hope to be favored with. (VII, 118)

Here Hawthorne finds something enjoyable in an otherwise tedious trip. In "My Visit to Niagara," his temporary apathy makes way for a great enthusiasm once he has studied the falls. At the end of the sketch, when Hawthorne describes leaving the site, he says,

> My steps were slow, and I paused long at every turn of the descent, as one lingers and pauses who discerns a brighter and brightening excellence in what he must soon behold no more. . . . My enjoyment became the more rapturous, because no poet shared it, nor wretch devoid of poetry profaned it; but the spot so famous through the world was all my own! (XII, 50)

Hawthorne's ability to recapture his original feelings about a spot characterizes the essay-sketches and takes them out of the "travel diary" league.

A second type of essay that Hawthorne wrote consists of sketches composed about domestic or philosophical subjects. Although Hawthorne is never candid enough in his writing to reveal highly personal facts, the domestic essay-sketches highlight his surroundings and way of life. Most of these sketches were composed while Hawthorne lived at the Old Manse (1838-1845)[1] and center around his observations of that environment. "The Old Manse," the prefatory essay to Mosses from an Old Manse, is perhaps the best-known of the domestic essay-sketches. In this sketch, as the sub-title indicates, "the author makes the reader acquainted with his abode." Far from containing descriptions of the merely physical attributes of his home, however, Hawthorne's "The Old Manse" delves into the history of the house, the history of its previous inhabitants, a description of the grounds surrounding the house and all of the objects of Nature therein, as well as some rather veiled personal philosophical musings.

In "The Old Manse" Hawthorne does not describe the house room by room in great detail. Rather he presents what appears to be a series of disjointed, unrelated descriptions of various aspects of life at the Old Manse. He describes spatially, as if he were actually walking and talking with the reader.

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[1] Randall Stewart, Nathaniel Hawthorne, p. 45.

He follows every side-light that could possibly lead from a conversation of this type.

Hawthorne starts the description of the house with the gates leading to the road up to the house, noting the seclusion of the place and contrasting life within the gates with life outside them. Inside the house, Hawthorne initially describes the study, but as he comes to a description of the three windows in the room, one of which looks northward out over a battlefield of the Revolutionary War, he notes that "perhaps the reader . . . will choose to take a nearer view of the memorable spot" (II, 14). Then Hawthorne "moves" the narrative out to the brink of the Concord River, where he begins a tour of the battlefield. After sufficient description of the battlefield, its monuments, and an imaginary reconstruction of a war story, Hawthorne leads the way back to the Old Manse through the orchard, where he finds ample material for musings about the "characters" of the trees there. Remembering his original purpose, Hawthorne writes by way of explanation, "What with the river, the battle-field, the orchard and the garden, the reader begins to despair of finding his way back into the Old Manse. But in agreeable weather it is the truest hospitality to keep him out-of-doors" (II, 24).

Hawthorne then proceeds to further description, not of the Old Manse <u>per se</u>, but of a rainy day, the library of sermons written by past inhabitants of the Old Manse, ghosts, a trip on the river, and other, somehow related, discourses.

Toward the end of the essay, Hawthorne laments what he feels is his inability to express the true character of life at the Old Manse. He exclaims,

> How narrow--how shallow and scanty too--is the stream of thought that has been flowing from my pen, compared with the broad tide of emotions, ideas, and associations which swell around me from that portion of my existence! (II, 43)

Hawthorne does not believe, moreover, that he has revealed much of himself in the exposition of this essay. He says,

> How little have I told! and of that little, how almost nothing is even tinctured with any quality that makes it exclusively my own! Has the reader gone wandering, hand in hand with me, through the inner passages of my being? and have we groped together into all its chambers and examined their treasures or their rubbish? Not so. We have been standing on the green-sward, but just within the cavern's mouth, where the common sunshine is free to penetrate, and where every footstep is therefore free to come. . . . So far as I am a man of really individual attributes I veil my face. (II, 43-44)

Hawthorne's method in this descriptive essay is to present a general impression of life at the Old Manse; he does so through the presentation of representative episodes of his life there without revealing any truly personal secrets. At the end of the essay, he notes, "Looking back over what I have written, it seems but the scattered reminiscences of a single summer" (II, 44). The episodic, conversational treatment in this essay underscores Hawthorne's attempt to recreate his way of life in his years at the Old Manse without really revealing his emotional ties to it.

"Fire Worship" is an essay-sketch which may be classified as domestic due to its primary purpose, which is to defend the sanctity of the hearth fire from usurpation by the iron pot-belly stove. Here, in a serio-comic vein, Hawthorne attacks the advent of modernity as far as it affects the traditions of the past by adopting the open fire as a symbol of the old-fashioned way of life. Hawthorne laments that the "inventions of mankind are fast blotting the picturesque, the poetic, and the beautiful out of human life" (II, 160). Using the hearth as the symbol of domestic order, he mingles philosophic statements with more simple observations in an effort to define his feelings about the traditions of the home.

Hawthorne defends fire as the means by which man has achieved the degree of technology, the inspiration of art, and the firmness of religious belief that he has, for Hawthorne believes that the fire has held together generations of the past in a special communion of spirits inspired by the light of the fire. Hawthorne once states, "It is my belief that social intercourse cannot long continue what it has been, now that we have subtracted from it so important and vivifying an element as firelight" (II, 160). Although fire has been the symbol of destruction, Hawthorne sees it primarily as a symbol of creation, as well as the symbol of home and faith. Hawthorne fears that without the fireplace as the focal point of the home, that

> domestic life, if it may still be termed domestic, will seek its separate corners, and never gather itself into groups. The easy gossip; the merry yet unambitious jest; the lifelike, practical discussion of real matters in a casual way; the soul of truth which is so often incarnated in a simple fireside word,--will disappear from earth. Conversation will contract the air of debate and all mortal intercourse be chilled with a fatal frost. (II, 168)

Finally, in recalling the classic "exhortation to fight pro aris et focis, for the altars and the hearths," he jestingly states that there will be no way to "rouse up native valor" since there will be no hearths. He concludes the essay by asking,

> Fight for your stoves! Not I, in faith. If in such a cause I strike a blow, it shall be on the invader's part; and Heaven grant that it may shatter the abomination all to pieces. (II, 169)

Ending in this humorous tone, Hawthorne places the essay in the position of having several possible levels of meaning. It can be read merely as a humorous diatribe against the stove, a reading the ending would appear to substantiate, or one can read it as a general, more serious statement warning against mankind's forsaking the simple traditions of the past for the easy, mechanistic way of life made possible by man's technology.

A third possible category for a discussion of Hawthorne's essay-sketches is that of nature essays. Although in the domestic and travel essay-sketches Hawthorne's eye in description is often to nature subjects, a few of the sketches seem to have as their primary purpose the celebration of nature. "Buds and Bird Voices" is a sketch which extolls and chronicles

the advent of spring through the various stages of development of that season. On one level, Hawthorne deals with the stages of nature as parallel to the stages of man's development, and on another with a strictly expository description of the advent of spring. As in almost all of his observations, he finds things "emblematic" in nature and points to them as analogous to man's plight.

In "Buds and Bird Voices" Hawthorne first heralds spring as a welcome change from a winter, which season is more suited to work than is spring, for

> in the spring and summer time all sombre thoughts should follow the winter northward with the sombre and thoughtful crows. The old paradisiacal economy of life is again in force; we live, not to think or to labor, but for the simple end of being happy. (II, 170)

Hawthorne praises the beauties of spring, personifying various aspects of it whenever this technique best suits the projected meaning of the piece. In this essay, as in some of the others, as has been shown before, Hawthorne uses the techniques of personification to develop his ideas better, and he continually uses comparison in an effort to inscribe some moral meaning to the facts of nature. At several points in the narrative, he uses personification to describe more vividly a certain aspect of nature. An example of this type of description through personification is shown in the following sentence:

> The present Spring comes onward with fleeter footsteps, because Winter lingered so unconscionably long that with her best diligence she can hardly retrieve half the alloted period of her reign. (II, 171)

In "Snow Flakes," another nature-centered essay sketch, Hawthorne again personifies Winter.

> Often, ere he will give up his empire, old Winter rushes fiercely back, and hurls a snow-drift at the striking form of Spring; yet, step by step, he is compelled to retreat northward, and spends the summer months within the Arctic circle. (I, 390)

This method allows Hawthorne to describe more imaginatively and more concisely the exact impression that the receding winter and approaching spring made on him.

Hawthorne's ability to moralize from his observations of spring are shown in the following examples. After a description of the "neglect and disarray" of the earth under the snow, he notes,

> On the soil of thought and in the garden of the heart, as well as in the sensual world, lie withered leaves--the ideas and feeling that we have done with. (II, 175)

In another spot, Hawthorne compares an aged lilac bush to an aged man and perhaps makes a statement concerning the artist:

> There is a kind of ludicrous unfitness in the idea of a time-stricken and grandfatherly lilac bush. The analogy holds good in human life. Persons who can only be graceful and ornamental--who can give the world nothing but flowers--should die young. (II, 173)

This ability to draw analogies from natural sights dots the essays and provides them with more interesting angles for analysis than a mere documentary presentation would.

A further trait of this nature sketch is the over-flowing spirit of religious exuberance which often prevails in description of nature. In "Buds and Bird Voices," Hawthorne even

describes birds as if they were worshipping. In describing the quietness of crows in the forest, he says,

> Many a time I shall disturb them there, and feel as if I had intruded among a company of silent worshippers, as they sit in Sabbath stillness among the tree-tops. (II, 176)

But later he admits, in an almost allegorical manner, that

> A crow, however, has no real pretentions to religion, in spite of his gravity of mien and black attire; he is certainly a thief, and probably an infidel. (II, 176)

In describing song birds, Hawthorne compares their songs to hymns:

> We need not deem it too high and solemn word to call it a hymn of praise to the Creator . . . (II, 177).

He says of the birds "we hear them saying their melodious prayers at morning's blush and eventide (II, 178). More important than these references to a religious delight in nature, however, is the pervading comparison that is made in the sketch paralleling spring with man's rebirth or eternal life. The last paragraph of the sketch emphasizes this aspect of the essay. Hawthorne describes spring as a "periodical infusion of the primal spirit" on man--a spirit of hope and continual rejuvenation. Hawthorne expresses his feelings about the inspiring forces of the spring in the following statements:

> Will the world ever be so decayed that spring may not renew its greenness? Can man be so dismally age-stricken that no faintest sunshine of his youth may revisit him once a year? It is impossible. . . . Alas for the worn and heavy soul if, whether in youth or age, it have outlived its privilege of spring-time sprightliness! (II, 180-181)

Thus the nature essay is filled with references to the lessons and inspirations that Hawthorne feels one can draw from nature.

"Snow Flakes," a nature essay extolling the beauties of winter, provides a close description of a snow scene and employs many of the same devices found in "Buds and Bird Voices." As mentioned previously, it employs personification in the description of winter; it also draws moral significance through the author's analogical observations of nature and man. Toward the end of the essay, Hawthorne describes the passage of a hearse down the road as seen from his study window. The author feels it is

> time to be disconsolate. But taking in a farewell glance at dead nature in her shroud, I perceive a flock of snow-birds skimming lightsomely through the tempest, and flitting from drift to drift, as sportively as swallows in the delightful prime of summer. . . . I know not whence they come, nor why; yet my spirit has been cheered by that wandering flock of snow-birds. (I, 391)

This ability to draw consolation from natural facts in the form of morals is characteristic of all of the essay-sketches, but best illustrated in the nature essays. Likewise, the philosophic, musing tone of the domestic essay is also found in other types of essay, for all of these traits are ultimately characteristic of Hawthorne's writing in general. Yet the essays, with their peculiar expository framework, provide an interesting backdrop for the study of several prominent Hawthornesque traits.

A few of the essay-sketches might be considered character sketches, and certainly many of the sketches include brief

character references within them. Hawthorne's ability to characterize shop-keepers, waiters, and paupers in a brief phrase is seen throughout the essay-sketches in Our Old Home, and these records add to the total effectiveness of Hawthorne's portrait of England. A brief paragraph of "Recollections of a Gifted Woman" illustrates how concisely Hawthorne is able to communicate his impression of Delia Bacon's character:

> She was rather uncommonly tall, and had a striking and expressive face, dark hair, dark eyes, which shone with an inward light as soon as she began to speak, and by and by a color came into her cheeks and made her look almost young. . . . I cannot tell how it came about, but we immediately found ourselves taking a friendly and familiar tone together, and began to talk as if we had known one another a very long while. (VII, 130-131)

Moreover, his ability to color the descriptions of strangers is seen in an excerpt from "Pilgrimage to Old Boston." Here he quickly captures his impressions of a woman seen from the window of the train:

> At one of the stations (it was near a village of ancient aspect, nestling round a church, on a wide Yorkshire moor) I saw a tall old lady in black, who seemed to have just alighted from the train. She caught my attention by a singular movement of the head, not once only, but continually repeated, and at regular intervals, as if she were making a stern and solemn protest against some action that developed itself before her eyes, and were foreboding terrible disaster, if it should be persisted in. (VII, 171)

The woman's involuntary, "paralytic" distortion of the face etches the memory of her on Hawthorne's mind and causes him to make this note:

> Her features had a wonderful sternness, which, I presume, was caused by her habitual effort to compose and keep them quiet, and thereby counteract the tendency to paralytic movement. The slow, regular, and inexorable character of the motion--her look of force and self-control, which had the appearance of rendering it voluntary, while yet it was so fateful--have stamped this poor lady's face and gesture into my memory; so that, some dark day or other, I am afraid she will reproduce herself in a dismal romance. (VII, 171)

These examples are fairly representative of the types of characterization that finds its way into the essay-sketches.

Separately the essay-sketches are colorful memoirs of the places Hawthorne visited or his observations of nature, institutions, and people; taken as a whole, they present a well-defined collection of Hawthorne's best expository prose in revelation of his attitudes and beliefs concerning the world around him. Whether taken directly from personal or travel journals or whether adapted from ideas germinating in his diaries or developed in the American Magazine of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge, Hawthorne's essay-sketches preserve a characteristic flavor of one aspect of his personality and reveal an often-overlooked facet of his creative genius.

CHAPTER V

THE SKETCH PROPER

The sketch-proper is tightly organized around a single encompassing thematic or moralistic design. In contrast to the short story, the sketch proper may not seem to have a fully developed plot, and there may seem to be a stasis in the piece; yet each sketch does contain fictional elements found in short stories which are used to characterize the theme or moral. One sketch may depend on character depiction with little action (such as "The Old Apple Dealer"); another may contain action--but with little conflict or complication--to develop the theme, as in "The Toll-Gatherer's Day." The idea that draws the sketch together is that it is precisely a sketch illustrative of one philosophic statement or depicting one picturesque character or scene.

Hawthorne introduces "The Toll-Gatherer's Day," subtitled "A Sketch of Transitory Life," by the following explanation of the rationale behind the sketch. Sitting on a bench on the toll-bridge, the narrator states, "I amuse myself with a conception, illustrated by numerous pencil sketches in the air, of the toll-gatherer's day" (I, 235). This is a "conception" of the events that occur on the toll-bridge--not a record, as an essay would be. Hawthorne relieves

himself of a duty to the strict facts but allows himself to take from those facts the philosophy of life that he will present in the essay.

In "The Procession of Life," the author is concerned with presenting an illustration of the belief that all people fall into certain categories since all people share a common human nature. The sketch presents a catalogue account of the different groups that encompasses all of the citizens of the world. In other sketches, there is a similar cataloguing of people or types of institutions. "A Select Party," "The Hall of Fantasy," "The Intelligence Office," and "The New Adam and Eve" are all examples of sketches which illustrate the abiding moral of the story by presenting a series of people or encounters with people.

The point of view in the sketch-proper is still author-observer with the narrator participating in the action occasionally. However, the author is more often absent from the text of the sketch, and there is a third person objectivity which was absent in the essays. Rather than being concerned with the semi-realistic presentation of a situation (as in the essays), the purpose of the sketch-proper seems to be to make "familiar objects appear visionary" (I, 235).

"The Virtuoso's Collection" is presented in the first person, and there is a purpose for this approach. This sketch and some others ("The Hall of Fantasy," for instance) present

material that is almost outrageously imaginative; the author needs the credence of the first-person account to make the sketch believable. Other points of view are used to fit specific situations in the sketches. "The Village Uncle" is a monologue, wherein the reader, by his own conjectures from what the narrator says, contributes a great deal to the interpretation of the piece. Another imaginative use of point of view is found in "A Rill from the Town Pump," which employs personification as well as a dramatic-monologue approach in presenting its slightly sarcastic temperance speech. Other points of view are used to fit the purpose of the individual piece, but the trait that unifies them as a group is the development or exposé of a theme without a highly developed plot or a great deal of action.

The style of writing in the sketches varies in accordance with the underlying purpose of the work. Each contains descriptive passages, for generally Hawthorne is attempting to characterize a thought by giving it "flesh-and-blood" life-likeness. There is noticeably less pure exposition in these pieces, and there is an increasing emphasis on sensual imagery. "Footprints on the Sea-Shore," "Sights from a Steeple," and "The Old Apple Dealer," for example, all depend on a layering of sight, sound, and smell imagery for the ultimate depiction of the mood expressed in the piece.

Another interesting trait in the writing of these pieces is their increasing tendency toward stasis in description.

As if Hawthrone were actually drawing an image with words, he often presents a panoramic description of a scene as if there were no motion in it. In "Sights from a Steeple," Hawthorne describes a quiet scene in the town:

> Yonder is a fair street, extending north and south. The stately mansions are placed on its carpet of verdant grass, and a long flight of steps descends from every door to the pavement. Ornamental trees--the broad-leafed horse-chestnut, the elm so lofty and bending, the graceful but infrequent willow, and others whereof I know not the names--grow thrivingly among the brick and stone. The oblique rays of the sun are intercepted by these green citizens, and by the houses, so that one side of the street is a shaded and pleasant walk. (I, 221)

Here Hawthorne organizes the description much as a painter would approach the canvas: from back to front, building an impression through general and specific detailing.

More so than in the essays, the sketch-proper seems to center around the expression of a single image: all the description of the piece is dependent upon the development of that one image. In the sketch-proper, Hawthorne draws out the details that will illuminate the ideals; in the essay, he records the impressions he has taken from life, drawing a moral (or morals) <u>á propos</u> to the situation, but never sustaining or characterizing the moral as he does in the sketch-proper. The sketch-proper becomes a vehicle for more than the depiction of a scene or character, because in these sketches Hawthorne is concerned with delivering a more formally-based development of the theme. Through the fictional aspects made possible in the sketch, Hawthorne is able to use

techniques that were impossible in the more factually-grounded essays. The use of symbolism, allegory, analogy, and fictionalized character and action makes possible a greater variety of forms to work with.

Several other traits are especially characteristic of the sketch-proper. Whereas in the essay-sketch Hawthorne uses fancy to embellish fact, in the sketch-proper, he uses fact to substantiate fancy. Through the use of a first-person witness, as mentioned before, he is able to present a fanciful detail in a matter-of-fact manner. In "A Virtuoso's Collection," where the narrator is purportedly taking a tour of a museum, Hawthorne uses specific detail to make the fantastic appear possible. One of the items in the museum which is endowed with material vividness is "Queen Mab's chariot, which, to guard it from the touch of meddlesome fingers, was placed under a glass tumbler" (II, 554). This tying of mundane fact with highly imaginative fiction is a common trait of the sketches.

Another trait characteristic of the sketches is the careful use of tone to further enhance a moral theme. In the most imaginative sketches ("Hall of Fantasy," "A Select Party," or "The Virtuoso's Collection," for example), the tone is matter-of-fact when dealing with the incredible or dryly sarcastic when revealing a moral. In "A Select Party," the tone is one of whimsical levity. The description of the guests

assembled at a party in a castle in the air by a "man of Fancy" is built around a rejection of fact in favor of fancy. The narrator describes the castle in the air, then castigates those individuals of the "lower world" who would doubtless reject the possibility of a castle in the air by saying,

> To such beholders it was unreal, because they lacked the imaginative faith. Had they been worthy to pass within its portal, they would have recognized the truth, that the dominions which the spirit conquers for itself, among unrealities become a thousand times more real than the earth whereon they stamp their feet, saying, 'This is solid and substantial; this may be called a fact.' (11, 71)

Even the names of the guests in "The Select Party" convey a sense of the whimsy of this sketch--Monsieur On-Dit, the Clerk of the Weather, the Oldest Inhabitant, and Nobody--all of whom are characterized with an eye to the humor of the situation.

The tone of "A Procession of Life," on the other hand, is macabre, and the entire sketch is pervaded by the almost morbid, dooms-day funereal description of the parade. The first line of the sketch sets the tone of the piece:

> Life figures itself to me as a festal or funereal procession. All of us have our places, and are to move onward under the direction of the Chief Marshall. (11, 235)

From these first lines until the end of the sketch, where the Chief Marshall is identified as Death--the one thing that all people in the parade have in common--the tone is uniformly moralistic.

As would be natural with work intended to characterize fanciful ideas by the use of fact, Hawthorne uses the devices of allegory and analogy as techniques of expressing moral themes and also as methods of drawing together ideas into one general framework. Hawthorne's use of allegory in the sketches is quite common due to the primary intention of the sketches, which is to embody ideas with recognizable, characterizable form. Virtually all of the sketches have a touch of allegory, for through them Hawthorne is dealing with the spiritual as perceived through the actual.

The sketches are meant, in great part, to instruct or correct society through the application of allegorically-presented morals. Although this instruction is entertainingly developed, it is presented through a series of incidents or characters rather than through the relation of a carefully-plotted story. "Fancy's Show Box" is an example of a sketch which takes as its primary purpose the presentation of a sermon-like warning to mankind. The sketch's moral is developed in anecdotal style by presenting the experience of Mr. Smith. In the first few lines, the author delineates the points he will be illustrating with Mr. Smith's case:

> What is guilt? A stain upon the soul. And it is a point of vast interest whether the soul may contract such stains, in all their depth and flagrancy, from deeds which may have been plotted and resolved upon, but which, physically, have never had existence. (I, 250)

This interest in the effects of guilt on the individual, whether or not the guilty act was actually committed or not, anticipates the treatment of Mr. Smith's encounter with Fancy, Memory, and Conscience, who illustrate to the venerable Mr. Smith all the "crimes" that he committed in his life by thought or by intent. Thus, there is no real development of plot, yet there is an "exhibition" of the deeds which illustrate to Mr. Smith and to the reader the effect on the conscience of sins committed inadvertently.

Care is taken in the sketches to present a moral that will effect change in the individuals who read the sketch. Often the sketches reveal social criticism, but more than this, they reveal a certain spiritual criticism of mankind. In "The Sister Years," a sketch which presents a dialogue between the Old Year and the New Year, Hawthorne makes some valid political comments, then progresses to more general spiritual notes. The Old Year, in telling the New Year of her experiences, describes the political "squabbles" she has been involved with during the past season. Then she adds:

> "There has indeed been a curious sort of war on the Canada border, where blood has streamed in the names of Liberty and Patriotism; but it must remain for some future, perhaps far distant Year, to tell whether or no those holy names have been rightfully invoked. Nothing so much depresses me, in my view of mortal affairs, as to see high energies wasted, and human life and happiness thrown away, for ends that appear oftentimes unwise, and still oftener remain unaccomplished. But the wisest people and the best keep a steadfast faith that the progress of Mankind is onward

> and upward, and that the toil and anguish of the path serve to wear away the imperfections of the Immortal Pilgrim, and will be felt no more when they have done their office." (I, 378)

Here Hawthorne couches spiritual and political comments within the framework of an entertaining allegorical narrative. The result is a unified illustration of specific, yet abstract, ideas.

Despite their primarily allegorical motifs, there is an increasing dependence in the sketches on creativity in description, and there is a great deal of wit applied in the presentation of various characters and situations.

Each of the sketches seems to contain all of the aforementioned stylistic traits, but some of the sketches illustrate one trait especially effectively. Discussion of a representative sketch or two will better define each of the techniques, themes or styles which recur in the sketches as a whole.

One technique that Hawthorne frequently employs is that of allegorically naming characters in the sketches according to the traits they supposedly possess. "Faith" in the story "Young Goodman Brown" is perhaps the most well-known example of this use of allegory, yet many of the sketches contain allegorically-named personages as well. "A Select Party," an imaginative sketch about a party given by a "Man of Fancy" in a castle in the air, incorporates allegorical characterization with witty commentary on historical personages in

amusing satire. The guests at this party include such whimsical characters as Monsieur On-Dit, "a brisk little gentleman of universal vogue in private society, and not unknown in the public journals" (II, 75); "Nobody," "a character of superhuman capacity and virtue, and, if his enemies are to be credited, of no less remarkable weaknesses and defects" (II, 74); and the Oldest Inhabitant, "that twin brother of Time, and great-grandsire of mankind, and hand-and-glove associate of all forgotten men and things" (II, 73).

In addition to these rather outlandish guests, the Man of Fancy has invited to his party

> an incorruptible Patriot; a Scholar without pedantry; a Priest without worldly ambition; and a Beautiful Woman without pride or coquetry; a Married Pair whose life had never been disturbed by incongruity of feeling; a Reformer untrammelled by his theory; and a Poet who felt no jealousy toward other votaries of the lyre. (II, 78-79)

In other words, the guests include all the imaginable persons who could probably fill an imaginary castle in the air.

In addition to this type of commentary on the guests at the party, Hawthorne surveys the impossible goals that men have had which are in evidence in this castle. In the library of this imaginary edifice there is a collection of rare volumes, rare because "they consisted not of actual performances, but of the works which the authors only planned, without ever finding the happy season to achieve them" (II, 83). The

library includes

> the untold tales of Chaucer's Canterbury Pilgrims; the unwritten cantos of the Fairy Queen; the conclusion of Coleridge's Christabel; and the whole of Dryden's projected epic on the subject of King Arthur. (II, 83)

Aside from these famous works, moreover, there are innumerable works by other more obscure authors. Indeed, "the shelves were crowded; for it would not be too much to affirm that every author has imagined and shaped out in his thought more and far better works than those which actually proceeded from his pen" (II, 83). Likewise, another room in the castle contains the ideas behind great works of art, "for it is not to be supposed that the pure idea of an immortal creation ceases to exist; it is only necessary to know where they are deposited in order to obtain possession of them" (II, 83).

In "A Select Party," the central setting, an imaginary party at a castle in the air, is described in terms of its possible concreteness. Through the realistic detailing of this sketch, Hawthorne is able to describe a dream world and endow it with those attributes which reveal his satirical or strictly whimsical purpose. In this sketch Hawthorne is able to make statements concerning art and the artist, human inter-relationships and values, and the substance and value of dreams.

Hawthorne's use of allegory to reveal moral values or lessons is seen in "The Intelligence Office," a sketch which uses a similar satiric tone in dealing with man's relationship

to man. "The Intelligence Office" uses as its setting a room in a building in the center of a city; this office is the central intelligence location for the "lost, found, and wanted" items of the citizens of the city--the difficulty is that it generally deals with intangible items. Examples of the petitioners of this office are given by the author:

> Now it was a thriving mechanic in quest of a tenement that should come within his moderate means of rent; now a ruddy Irish girl from the banks of Killarney, wandering from kitchen to kitchen of our land, while her heart still hung in the peat smoke of her native cottage; now a single gentleman looking out for economical board; and now--for this establishment offered an epitome of worldly pursuits--it was a faded beauty inquiring of her lost bloom . . . or an author of ten years' standing from his vanished reputation; or a moody man for yesterday's sunshine. (II, 363-364)

As in "A Select Party" the collection of personages in "The Intelligence Office" is composed of all degrees of believable and unbelievable characters. The "Intelligencer," the character whose job it is to interview applicants and counsel them, is similar in station to the "Man of Fancy" in "A Select Party" in that he is the central organizing force around which the other characters are staged.

With a cataloguing technique typical of other sketches, characters parade through the Central Intelligence Office typifying the various requests people might have. One man is searching for his true place in life; another wants to exchange his heart with someone (and does so with a young girl who comes into the office); another seeks to find a

precious jewel that he has lost--the gem turns out to be the Pearl of Great Price, which the Intelligencer says that he is not authorized to give back.

As in the other sketches, Hawthorne frequently takes each opportunity which presents itself for a moralistic or satiric comment on the state of the world and human nature. In listing the contents of the lost and found file, the author makes several comments similar in tone to the following one. In the drawer, there are

> a great number of wedding-rings, each one of which had been riveted upon the finger with holy vows, and all the mystic potency that the most solemn rites could attain, but had, nevertheless, proved too slippery for the wearer's vigilance. (II, 369)

Hawthorne also finds opportunity for commenting through the Intelligencer, as when one of the spirits who assisted Dr. Faustus comes seeking employment. The Intelligencer replies that the demon's chance of finding a place is small, for "Nowadays, men act the evil spirit for themselves and their neighbors, and play the part more effectually than ninety-nine out of a hundred of your fraternity" (II, 373).

Toward the end of the sketch, the last visitor, a Seeker, who has made his whole life an attempt to find the Truth, reveals in a dialogue with the Intelligencer the true identity of that character and gives Hawthorne the opportunity for one last comment on the human condition. Upon the Seeker's inquiry, the Intelligencer replies,

> 'Yours is a mind,' answered the Man of Intelligence, 'before which the forms and fantasies that conceal the inner idea from the multitude vanish at once and leave the naked reality beneath. Know, then, the secret. My agency in world action, my connection with the press, and tumult, and intermingling, and development of human affairs, is merely delusive. The desire of man's heart does for him whatever I seem to do. I am no minister of action, but the Recording Spirit.' (II, 379-380)

Thus after cataloguing an array of allegorical characters representative of all human faults and problems, Hawthorne explains the idea behind the presentation of "The Intelligence Office" by stating that each man is capable, and indeed, required, to decide his own course of action in his life.

As in "A Select Party" and "The Intelligence Office," "The Procession of Life" has a central organizing figure, allegorical figures representative of ideas Hawthorne wants to express, and a basic setting developed for the best presentation of a series of thoughts. "The Procession of Life" takes as its controlling idea, as Hawthorne states in the introductory paragraph, that "life figures itself . . . as a festal or funereal procession" (II, 235). Basing the sketch upon this central idea of a parade or "procession of life," Hawthorne catalogues people according to the groups they belong to in the parade. Rejecting the external classifications that the world often makes between people--such as wealth, poverty, or occupation--which are in the author's words "the merest external circumstances," Hawthorne bases his categorization upon "those realities by which nature,

fortune, fate, or Providence has constituted for every man a brotherhood, wherein it is one great office of human wisdom to classify him" (II, 236).

The first group consists of all people afflicted with physical diseases and it is shown that this category cuts across all class distinctions. Next "those whom the gifts of intellect have united in a noble brotherhood" (II, 238) are gathered together; again this category is claimed to be "a reality, before which the conventional distinctions of society melt away like vapor when we would grasp it with the hand" (II, 239). Those who are grief-stricken, those who belong to "the brotherhood of crime," and the Good are further examples of the types of distinctions the author draws in classifying the population of the earth not on externally superficial values, but upon the most inner, personal distinctions that can be made.

Finally Hawthorne reveals the identity of the Chief Marshal of the parade in much the same way that he reveals the identity of the Intelligencer in "The Intelligence Office." The unifying figure qualified to lead the procession of life is Death, for "who else could assume the guidance of a procession that comprehends all humanity?" (II, 251).

Again Hawthorne has presented a series of small lessons by discussing each of the categories that make up his procession of life; finally he culminates the sketch by drawing

one final moral lesson. Ending on an optimistic note in an otherwise rather depressing sketch, Hawthorne concludes that although even Death will desert the procession, not knowing the ultimate goal, God "will not leave us on our toilsome and doubtful march, either to wander in infinite uncertainty, or perish by the way!" (II, 252).

"The Hall of Fantasy" uses in part, the cataloguing technique exemplified by the previously-discussed sketches, and the unreal is mingled with the real in an attempt to justify the fancifulness of some parts of the sketch. The setting of this piece is similar to the castle in the air of "A Select Party"; it consists of a spacious marble hall, the characteristics of which give "the impression of a dream, which might be dissipated and shattered to fragments by merely stamping the foot upon the pavement" (II, 196) and which it is occasionally hard to gain entrance to except "by the universal passport of a dream" (II, 197). The Hall of Fantasy houses memorials to all the dreams and ideas that men have had in past and present ages. The hall represents an Exchange, according to the narrator's tour guide, where "all who have affairs in that mystic region, which lies above, below, or beyond the actual, may . . . meet and talk over the business of their dreams" (II, 197).

Statues commemorate "men who in every age have been rulers and demigods in the realms of imagination and its

kindred regions" (II, 197). Homer, Aesop, Ariosto, Raphael, Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton, and Bunyan are by "indestructible memorials of real genius" all represented in marble; each generation chooses "its own ephemeral favorites" and these are fashioned in wood--subject to decay with time.

Besides the artists represented here, the hall of fantasy is a meeting place for other men of genius and wisdom. The narrator observes several gatherings of men of genius in the hall of fantasy besides poets; urban planners, "inventors of fantastic machines," and reformers make up the other inhabitants of the hall of fantasy, as well as occasional visitors of a more usual sort. At one point the narrator states, in speaking of the hall of fantasy,

> And with all its dangerous influences, we have reason to thank God that there is such a place of refuge from the gloom and chillness of actual life. Hither may come the prisoner, escaping from his dark and narrow cell and cankerous chain, to breathe free air in this enchanted atmosphere. The sick man leaves his weary pillow, and finds strength to wander hither. . . . It may be said in truth, that there is but half a life--the meaner and earthlier half--for those who never find their way into the hall. (II, 203)

The hall of fantasy becomes Hawthorne's description of man's intellectual and spiritual refuge away from the physical world. By peopling the hall with "visitors," over-hearing and commenting upon their conversations, and carrying on a dialogue with his tour guide, Hawthorne is able to make comments--often even contradictory ones--which reveal his thoughts on a variety of subjects, but primarily on the relationship of the actual to the ideal.

"The New Adam and Eve" is likewise a sketch whose format lends itself to satirical observations on the part of the author. Supposedly set in a time after the end of the world, the new Adam and Eve find themselves in a deserted city. The action of the sketch centers around their exploration of the city's buildings and institutions. The purpose of this wandering commentary seems to be expressed by the author in the first two lines of the sketch.

> We who are born into the world's artificial system can never adequately know how little in our present state and circumstances is natural, and how much is merely the interpolation of the perverted mind and heart of man. Art has become a second and stronger nature; she is the stepmother, whose crafty tenderness has taught us to despise the bountiful and wholesome ministrations of our true parent. (II, 279)

Through the reactions of the new Adam and Eve, therefore, Hawthorne proposes to show the value of the natural world over the artificial, "civilized" one.

Adam and Eve visit a "fashionable dry goods store," a church, the courthouse and the prison--all of which places they reject as unnatural and which are described with the type of editorial comment displayed in the following discussion of the jail:

> . . . this edifice was a hospital for the direst disease which could afflict their predecessors. Its patients bore the outward marks of that leprosy with which all are more or less infected. They were sick--and so were the purest of their brethren--with the plague of sin. A deadly sickness, indeed! (II, 287)

In this manner the author comments on each place that the new Adam and Eve visit to further illustrate the moralistic theme that the sketch expresses.

At the end of the sketch, as is common in the concluding passages of the sketches previously discussed, Hawthorne draws the piece together with a final, all-encompassing statement of theme. As in "The Procession of Life," where the only unifying factor of mankind (as represented by the Grand Marshal) is Death, the last place Adam and Eve visit--the cemetery, appears to them the most natural and happy place of all. Lying down to sleep beneath the statue of a child on a tombstone, Adam succinctly states the moral of the sketch:

> Let us sleep as this little figure is sleeping. Our Father only knows whether what outward things we have possessed today are to be snatched from us forever. But should our earthly life be leaving us with the departing light, we need not doubt that another morn will find us somewhere beneath the smile of God. (II, 302)

Away from the allegorical method of the other sketches, but retaining the sequential discussion of events--or the cataloguing technique--and finishing with a major statement of theme, "The New Adam and Eve" presents a dramatization of an idea that Hawthorne was concerned with--the superiority of nature over art in its broadest sense--in the form of an imaginative sketch.

By applying just such an imaginative turn to each of the sketches-proper, Hawthorne was able to present an array

of approaches, techniques, and styles while dealing with the themes and abstract ideas he was concerned with committing to sketch form. The result of this experimentation with form is a body of sketches with a literary format which falls somewhere between the expository essay on one extreme, and the story, or tale-proper on the other. The development of Hawthorne's mastery of technique in the sketches can be observed through the individual pieces, as well as through the sketches as a whole.

CHAPTER VI

THE VIGNETTE SKETCH

As has been shown within each of the three types of sketch classifications, certain categorizations may be made in an attempt to understand better the distinctions among the three types. Each of the three types of sketch becomes interesting for some aspect of its unique development. The essay-sketch is most valuable for its ability to present a scene or sometimes even a feeling about a scene, situation or character, through expository description. The sketch-proper is effective in embodying an idea or moral theme with form through the use of certain literary techniques. The vignette, as a more creative expression of a moral, may best be studied in the light of the thematic and symbolic meanings it reveals. A study of the vignette reinforces the idea that it is an art form apart from the other sketches.

The sketch proper has a broader interest in creativity of description and a greater dependence on the fulfillment of moral themes than does the essay-sketch, and it takes as its subject more fanciful ideas than can the experience-bound essay. Likewise, the vignette, so called because of its presentation in miniature of a subtle plot and pencil-outlined characters, is an interesting hybrid of the sketch and the

tale. Not quite developed into a story, but more filled-out than the sketch, the vignette is a type of sketch which gives enough detailing of plot and character to create an interesting impression, but which does not really develop either of these characteristics in enough depth for it to be classified as a short story or tale proper.

The organization of the vignette is along the concise lines of the fictional narrative, yet it may give the impression of less development (especially in complication of plot and action) than the tale proper. "The Canterbury Pilgrims" illustrates this point. This vignette revolves around the meeting of Miriam and Josiah, two run-aways from a Shaker village, with six travellers who propose to join that same community. Meeting at a fountain on the rise of a hill outside that Shaker village in the moonlight, the six pilgrims--a poet, a merchant, a farmer, his wife and two children--try to dissuade the young couple from leaving the village. The conversation carried on among the people and the final decision of the young man and woman to continue out into the world comprise the entire "action" of the sketch. The interesting treatment of theme, the increasing emphasis on symbolism, and the added importance of setting and light make this vignette closer to the form inherent in the tale than to that found in the sketch. The vignette is organized as a traditional short story or tale would be; the difference is that in the

vignette, the elements of the story are treated with different emphases, dependent on the main intent of the piece. The mode of writing in the vignette varies with the point that is emphasized, and there is never the really complete development of all facets of short fiction found in the tale-proper.

The organization of the individual vignette is dependent on the amount of plot or type of emphasis in the piece. In "The Wedding Knell" and "The Wives of the Dead," the organization is based around the unfolding of what purport to be a folk-legends. Grounding the stories in fact, the author develops their moralistic or thematic elements according to their over-all designs. "The Wedding Knell" begins with this account of the origin 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 made it her favorite narrative. (I, 41)

By use of this device, Hawthorne lays the groundwork for the veracity of the sketch, although he goes on to add in this paragraph that he is not really certain that this is the same building that his grandmother spoke of, although it is on the same site. He states,

> I am not antiquarian enough to know; nor would it be worth while to correct myself, perhaps, of an agreeable error, by reading the date of its erection on the tablet over the door. . . . With such a place, though the tumult of the city rolls beneath its tower, one would be willing to connect some legendary interest. (I, 41)

Despite the fact that he is not sure of the factual accuracy of his tale, the author is "willing to connect some legendary interest" to the spot because of its picturesqueness. Hawthorne uses the facts of the legend, vague though they might be, as the framework for the organization of his own sketch.

In "The Wives of the Dead," Hawthorne again organizes the sketch around an obscure legend. The vignette is briefly introduced through the following statement: "The following story, the simple and domestic events 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" (III, 598). Again through the use of a few specifics, Hawthorne is able to pursue his own method of organization, developing those aspects of the sketch that best reveal his interests in the tale.

Because the vignettes are primarily creative rather than expository, these sketches take the form of organization that best fits the points in the sketch that the author wants to emphasize. The point of view used in each vignette also varies in accordance with the stress of the sketch. The author is occasionally present, especially in laying the necessary factual foundation for the piece, but more often, the vignette is arranged around a third-person narrative. Occasionally, the author takes the omniscient position outside the action of the story if the situation merits this

treatment. In "Egotism; or the Bosom Serpent," the author is omniscient, and the author's comments reveal only the necessary background for the piece, while the dialogue of the characters reveals the rest. Although he treats the subject allegorically, the author is not as didactically involved in the moral as is the case in most of the allegorical sketches, and this vignette retains a suspense unknown in the development of the other sketches. In "Egotism," the author leaves the interpretation of the piece ambiguous and does not reveal whether the main character of the sketch is "the victim either of a diseased fancy or a horrible physical misfortune" (II, 303).

In "Main Street," the author presents the character of the showman, who then narrates the story through the explanation of the scenes he is supposedly showing in his puppet show. Thus there is a third-person foundation for the piece, yet most of the narrative is in monologue form with the author merely recording what the showman is saying. Occasionally there is also dialogue, as when the critic in the audience interrupts the show. By using this rather involved device in the point of view of the sketch, Hawthorne is able to project what almost amounts to a play within a play, for the narration of the showman becomes the script for Hawthorne's sketch. In the introductory paragraph, the showman states,

> I have contrived a certain pictorial exhibition, somewhat in the nature of a puppet show, by means of which I propose to call up the multiform and many-colored Past before the spectator, and show him the ghosts of his forefathers, amid a succession of historic incidents, with no greater trouble than the turning of a crank. (III, 439)

Part of the interest in the sketch lies in the fact that Hawthorne is doing exactly what the showman is doing by recording the imaginary scenes in the show. "The little wheels and springs" of the "machinery have been well oiled" in both cases, for the narrator-character and the author alike accomplish the goal set forth at the commencement of the sketch.

The organization and point of view used in the vignettes are as varied and diverse as the number of pieces would warrant, and yet there are some characteristic traits which draw the sketches together more as a group. Many of the vignettes possess a pictorial unity in their descriptive passages greater than that of the sketch-proper. This picture-like quality is heightened by the general laxness of plot and character development. "The Canterbury Pilgrims" is introduced by a paragraph illustrative of this point. The quiet description of the first lines anticipates the quietness of the whole sketch. First "the summer moon" is described as "beaming over a broad extent of uneven country" and especially shining brightly into the spring on the side of the hill. "While the moon was hanging almost perpendicularly over this spot, two figures appeared on the summit of the hill,

and came with noiseless footsteps down towards the spring" (III, 518). Then Hawthorne progresses to a description of the two figures--Miriam and Josiah--with close attention to the picturesque quality of their attire. The translucent character of the scene is shown through the following comparison in describing the appearance of the young couple:

> But that there was something too warm and lifelike in them, I would have compared this couple to the ghosts of two young lovers who had died long since in the glow of passion, and now were straying out of their graves, to renew the old vows, and shadow forth the unforgotten kiss of their earthly lips, beside the moonlit spring. (III, 519)

The description in this passage is balanced carefully to achieve the contemplative mood desired, and the arrangement of objects in the scene is done with an eye to the visual effects attempted.

"Main Street" is composed of a series of pictures drawn by the showman's puppets and the author's narrative simultaneously. In a description of the scene where a new governor enters the colony, the following pictorial account is presented:

> At the point where Endicott enters upon the scene, two venerable trees unite their branches high above his head; thus forming a triumphal arch of living verdure, beneath which he pauses, with his wife leaning on his arm, to catch the first impression of their new-found home. (III, 446)

Despite the fact that the narrative description in this sketch is avowedly that of the description of an actual still-life puppet show, the pictorial unity of the scene is successfully

rendered through the words used to describe it. Pictorial scenes of this type may be found throughout the vignettes, for this type of sketch is often an illumination through description or the revelation of physical objects which might be symbolically interpreted.

Further characteristic traits of the vignettes are the increasing prevalence of suspense and the reliance on ambiguity in these pieces, both of which deepen the literary interest in them. A sense of suspense generally absent in the essays and sketches places the style of the vignette closer to the creative form of the tale than to the sketch-proper. The ambiguity of the vignettes is related both to the symbolic and the allegorical intent of the sketches.

The increasing use of suspense in the vignettes creates a heightened interest in the narrative aspect of the sketches. "The Wedding Knell" presents a good example of the suspense that can be built in this type of sketch. This vignette, which starts off with the avowal that the story is built on legend, uses foreshadowing techniques in order to create a sense of mystery. The tolling of the funeral bells as the aged bride crosses the threshold of the wedding chapel first warns that all is not well. The third "stroke of the bell seemed to fill the church with visible gloom, dimming and obscuring the bright pageant, till it shone forth again as from a mist" (I, 45). The choice of imagery from this point

also heightens the foreboding direction of the narrative. The bells, for instance, continue to chime "with the same doleful regularity as when a corpse is on its way to church" (I, 46). The approach of a hearse, which the wedding guests and the bride first assume to be on its way to the cemetery, creates more horror when it stops at the door of the church. When the "mourners" disembark from the funeral procession and enter the church, the bride discovers that they are really her peers--friends of the old days who have gracefully grown old--and that the "corpse" is in actuality the bridegroom, who has contrived this charade in an attempt to hurt his bride's pride. It is now discovered that the groom has arranged this morbid lesson for his bride because she had jilted him years ago and had married two other husbands before she consented to wed him in her relatively old age. The bride, whose vanity has compelled her to act and dress like a much younger woman, is sufficiently remorseful, and she accepts her third husband for "eternity." This happy ending of the sketch results in the resolution of the suspense; yet the suspense is carefully carried through to the end.

The ambiguity in interpretation of some of the vignettes may be seen most effectively in "The Wives of the Dead." Although this tale may be read strictly as legend, there seems to be a clue in Hawthorne's introduction that would warrant looking further into the sketch for additional meaning.

In the introductory paragraph, Hawthorne states that "the simple and domestic events" of the sketch "may be deemed scarcely worth relating," but that one hundred years ago the tale "awakened some degree of interest" among the inhabitants of the seaport in which the event supposedly occurred. The author goes on to set forth the facts necessary as background material; these consist merely of the following: "the rainy twilight of an autumn day,--a parlor on the second floor of a small house, plainly furnished, as beseemed the middling circumstances of its inhabitants, yet decorated with little curiosities from beyond the sea, and a few delicate specimens of Indian manufacture,--these are the only particulars to be premised in regard to scene and season" (III, 598). This rather hurried introduction places added emphasis on the careful development of the rest of the story.

H. J. Lang has pointed out that the sketch may have a deeper meaning than a cursory reading would allow. Lang notes the use of lighting in the sketch and finds it significant; then he investigates the last line of the piece. He asks, "Is it believable that such a careful and unhurried writer as Hawthorne wrote an ambiguous sentence at the end of a story without meaning it to be ambiguous?"[1] The ambiguity

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[1] "How Ambiguous is Hawthorne?" Geist einer Freien Gesellschaft, Ed. Lewis Hammond et al. (Heidelberg: Quelle and Meyer, 1962), rpt. in A. N. Kaul, ed., Hawthorne: A Collection of Critical Essays (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1966), p. 88.

that Lang sees in the last line is in the interpretation of the pronoun "she." The last lines read as follows:

> Before retiring, she set down the lamp, and endeavored to arrange the bedclothes so that the chill air might not do harm to the feverish slumberer. But her hand trembled against Margaret's neck, a tear also fell upon her cheek, and she suddenly awoke. (III, 606)

The startling, abrupt conclusion of the sketch leads one to accept Lang's interpretation that the events occurring in the sketch are, in actuality, the events of a dream that Mary is having. Lang notes in reference to the ambiguous "she" that "read as a dream, it is perfectly natural."[2]

Re-reading this sketch with an eye to other possible interpretations reveals certain religious implications, the extensive use of light imagery, and other interesting angles for analysis.

The use of symbolism in the vignettes is another indicator of the proximity of this type of sketch to the tale proper. Several symbols predominate in the vignettes, as they do all of Hawthorne's work. The moon or moonlight appears often as representative of the presence of imagination or fancy. In "The Canterbury Pilgrims," the revolving of the introduction around moonlight has been pointed out. In "Sylph Etherege," moonlight and light in general play important parts in the development of Sylvia's (Sylph's) character.

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[2] Ibid., p. 88.

The sketch commences "on a bright summer evening" where the reader first sees Sylvia through the window in the light of a sunset.

> The girl's slender and sylph-like figure, tinged with radiance from the sunset clouds, and overhung with the rich drapery of the silken curtains, and set within the deep frame of the window, was a perfect picture; or rather, it was like the original loveliness in a painter's fancy, from which the most finished picture is but an imperfect copy. (III, 508-509)

This first appearance of Sylvia shows her gazing at the miniature of the man whom she supposes to be her future husband. She carries the miniature with her always, for from it "she could summon forth, from that haunted cell of pure and blissful fantasies, the life-like shadow, to roam with her in the moonlight garden" (III, 512-513).

Finally, one evening while the twilight "grew deeper and duskier," with light only from the "softened gleam from an alabaster lamp," Sylvia awaits (with her guardian, Mrs. Grosvenor) the first meeting with her betrothed. When she discovers that the person she has loved in the miniature does not have the same identity as Edgar Vaughan, Sylvia faints. At this, Edgar throws "the light of the lamp on Sylvia's closed eyes and marble features" (III, 516). Edgar chooses the artificial light of the lamp in an effort to see Sylph, although she is best seen in the moonlight.

At the end of the tale, Sylvia is seen sitting "in a shadowy and moonlighted recess of the room," where "the

bough of a tree was waving before the window, and sometimes enveloped her in the gloom of its shadow, into which she seemed to vanish" (III, 517). The light imagery in this sketch seems to be purposefully linked to the ambiguity of interpretations that may be made of the story and is used to accentuate the spirit-like character of Sylph.

In "Main Street," when chastised by the critic in the audience, ("an acidulous-looking gentleman in blue glasses with bows of Berlin steel") that the show is not effectively staged or representative of the facts that the showman is attempting to show, the showman tells the gentleman that he does not have "the proper point of view" and suggests that he move to another bench, where, the showman says, "I venture to assure you the proper light and shadow will transform the spectacle into quite another thing" (III, 448). Here again, then, light and shadow are the prerequisites for any workings of the imagination.

In "Egotism; or the Bosom Serpent," light is used to represent the choice of the main character for evil over good. Because Roderick Elliston is possessed by evil, he spurns the light of day in favor of darkness. This is characterized by the following passage:

> Not merely the eye of man was a horror to him; not merely the light of a friend's countenance, but even the blessed sunshine, likewise, which in its universal benificence typifies the radiance of the Creator's face, expressing his love for all the creatures of his hand. The dusky twilight was now too transparent for Roderick Elliston; the blackest midnight was his chosen hour to steal abroad. (II, 307)

Here light takes another meaning, and Elliston's choice of darkness over light is paralleled by his choice of evil over good.

In "The Wives of the Dead," light is used to accentuate the difference between fact and fancy and to reveal the ambiguity of the scene. Mary and Margaret, both recent widows of brothers who supposedly died within two days of each other, are consoling one another about their widowhood. Upon retiring at night, they "heaped ashes upon the dying embers of the hearth." This is contrasted to "the cheerful radiance of the fire" when the two couples had previously been together.

Late at night, the innkeeper comes to the door and tells Margaret that her husband was not really killed after all. As the innkeeper passes down the street, the author gives the following description of the effect of the light thrown from his lantern:

> So saying, the honest man departed; and his lantern gleamed along the street, bringing to view indistinct shapes of things, and the fragments of a world, like order glimmering through chaos, or memory roaming over the past. (III, 602)

Another symbol used with great frequency in the vignettes, as well as Hawthorne's other tales, is the fountain. Sylph Etherege gazes at the miniature, whose "heavenly eyes gazed forever into her soul, which drank at them as at a fountain" (III, 513). The Canterbury pilgrims meet beside an unusual fountain which is always full, yet never overflowing. "Though

the basin had not room for another drop, and the continual gush of water made a tremor on the surface, there was a secret charm that forbade it to overflow." The author further observes that it was almost as if "Nature could not afford to lavish so pure a liquid, as she does the waters of all meaner fountains" (III, 519).

"The Man of Adamant" chooses a spot for his reclusion where "there was nothing bright nor cheerful near it, except a bubbling fountain, some twenty paces off, at which Richard Digby hardly threw away a glance" (III, 566). Later, when Mary Goffe, in actuality an angel, comes to redeem Digby, she offers him water from the fountain as medicine to cure the stoniness of his heart.

> Espying the bright fountain near at hand, she hastened thither, and scooped up a portion of its water in a cup of birchen bark. (III, 570)

Digby, however, refuses her help, throwing "the cup of hallowed water upon the threshold of the cave, thus rejecting the only medicine that could have cured his stony heart" (III, 571).

In "Egotism; or the Bosom Serpent," a fountain plays a vital role in Roderick's cure. The fountain is described as follows:

> Roderick was reclining on the margin of a fountain which gushed into the fleckered sunshine with the same clear sparkle and the same voice of airy quietude as when trees of primeval growth flung their shadows across its bosom. How strange is the life of a fountain!--born at every moment, yet of an age coeval with the rocks, and far surpassing the venerable antiquity of a forest. (II, 318)

It is into this fountain that, when Roderick forgets himself for a moment, he is "renewed, restored to his right mind, and rescued from the fiend which had so miserably overcome him in the battlefield of his own breast" (II, 320). The typical Hawthornesque ambiguity is maintained in this situation, but the fountain seems to have some significance in Roderick's cure. The account of the "spirits" leaving his body is described as follows:

> A tremor shivered through his frame. At that moment, if report be trustworthy, the sculptor beheld a waving motion through the grass, and heard a tinkling sound, as if something had plunged into the fountain. (II, 329)

Besides the prevalence of light and shadow and fountain imagery, there is one other symbol which predominates these vignettes. Cavern imagery is often coupled with an interest in the heart, as in "The Man of Adamant." The cave that Richard Digby, the title character of the vignette, chooses to seclude himself in "entered into the heart of a rocky hill" (III, 566). The cavern is described as "sepulchral," "tomb-like," a "vaulted chamber"; the foliage is "embalmed" by the dew which falls from the top of the cave into "sprigs of marble foliage." A further comment sums up implied meaning of the cavern:

> If Nature meant this remote and dismal cavern for the use of man, it could only be to bury in its gloom the victims of a pestilence, and then to block up its mouth with stones, and avoid the spot forever after. (III, 566)

This is the spot, as described in the "apologue," that Digby chooses to seclude himself from the world, although physicians

have already told him that he is suffering from a disease which threatens to calcify his heart and "change his fleshy heart to stone" (III, 567).

In "The Man of Adamant," heart imagery is closely tied to cavern imagery, for in cutting himself off from mankind by the hardening of his heart, Digby has effectually entombed himself up into the ultimate isolation of death. Here Hawthorne presents the downfall of a proud man who chooses isolation to cut himself away from the sinfulness of mankind, yet at the same time, cuts himself off from life itself.

In "Egotism; or the Bosom Serpent" Hawthorne presents a character with a heart that is being eaten by the serpent of self-love. Roderick Elliston makes those around him miserable as well, because "the cavern of his own bosom had not proved deep and dark enough to hide the secret, even while it was so secure a fortress for the loathsome fiend that had crept into it" (II, 309). In this sketch, Roderick Elliston has created his own punishment by dwelling upon himself to the exclusion of all the rest of humanity.

Hawthorne's use of symbolism in the vignettes is an offshoot of the use of theme that he developed in the sketches. The "emblems" that Hawthorne employs to illustrate his themes are interesting in their recurrence in the sketches and in the variations which they assume in different pieces.

All of these characteristic traits make the vignette similar to the tale, and yet occasionally the vignettes revert to the machinery and techniques used in the sketches. In "Egotism; or the Bosom Serpent," for example, Hawthorne uses the cataloguing technique in listing the different serpents that individuals may have in their hearts. The cataloguing is used in conjunction with the same dry sarcasm used in the sketches to gently deride man and his institutions. In listing the various types of serpents Roderick Elliston had found in his fellow humans, the author records that Elliston once said that a certain statesman must be possessed by a boa constrictor, "for of that species, Roderick affirmed, this gentleman's serpent must needs be, since its appetite was enormous enough to devour the whole country and constitution" (II, 311). A miser is accused of being possessed by a copperhead, which "had been generated by the immense quantities of that base metal, with which he daily defiled his fingers" (II, 311); a drinker of spirits is told that "few bosom serpents had more of the devil in them than those that breed in the vats of a distillery" (II, 311); and a clergyman is told that he "swallowed a snake in a cup of sacramental wine" (II, 312). The list goes on to include serpents representing many of the obsessions or vices that men are prey to, or that they have allowed to gain control over their hearts.

In "The Canterbury Pilgrims," a series of people representative of the world (a poet, a merchant, and a farmer) recite their experiences at failure in the world much as characters in the sketches-proper give their accounts of life. In "Main Street" a series of historical sketches, tied together with occasional comments on art criticism and couched in the medium of a puppet show, are recorded in much the same way, although in a rather more complex setting, as the other sketches are.

Allegory and analogy are also techniques which touch the vignettes in a way reminiscent of the sketches. "The Man of Adamant" is sub-titled "An Apolgue" and is doubtless meant to be read allegorically. "Egotism; or the Bosom Serpent" treats sins of the heart allegorically, and traces of allegory may be found in other vignettes as well.

The vignettes take elements of the essay and the sketch and combine them with the more imaginative elements to be found in the tales to produce a unique creation. Fact is melded into fantasy; theme and symbol are used concurrently; and ambiguity and suspense are woven into narrative. The total effect is one which adds another dimension to the sketch. Although the main intent may still be to describe a scene, character or situation, to develop a theme or to provide a moral, the vignette is the most creative in its use of these elements in the final product.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Hawthorne's contribution to the development of American literature cannot be overestimated. Through studying the traditions, places, and people around him, though without narrowing his writing to provincialism, Hawthorne took the most interesting facets of his environment, transfused them with his particular themes and moral messages, and transformed this material through artistic and stylistic channels into the essays, sketches, and tales that make up the body of his short fiction. His choice of short literary forms in his early career is analyzed by Fred Lewis Pattee:

> Everything had seemed to turn him to the shorter varieties of prose--the demands of the magazines, the uncertain market for American novels, the nature of his own genius, which was more inclined to brood over moral situations then to plan elaborate structures of plot--and in his solitary chamber he wrote to please himself.[1]

What Hawthorne did with the short forms that he adopted has influenced the course of American literature to the present; one modern critic has gone so far as to observe, "The contemporary short story owes more to Hawthorne than to any other one person."[2]

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[1] Development of the American Short Story, p. 107.

[2] Herschel Brickell, "What Happened to the Short Story" Atlantic Monthly 178 (Sept., 1951), 74.

Hawthorne's creative process was influenced by those artists whose work he studied, and took shape from his experiences with people and places in his own time; yet his work is highly original. His essay-sketches, sketches-proper, and vignette-sketches pointed a new direction for short fiction, for, as Newton Arvin has said, Hawthorne "was as much the creator as he was the inheritor of form."[3] Furthermore, what Arvin has noted about the tales holds true for the essay-sketches, sketches-proper, and vignettes as well; Hawthorne's short pieces "express his nature, his personal sense of things, so subtly and truly that there can be no question of loss or limitation."[4] Because he had a major role in initiating the form that short fiction would take, his dependence on authors who had gone before him was negligible.

Whether he wrote in essay-sketch, sketch-proper, vignette, tale-proper or novel form, Hawthorne retained the same artistic ideals which make his work unique. Regardless of the type of short fiction he wrote, whether sketch or short story, Hawthorne maintained his artistic identity. This consistency of style makes the body of his work an easily recognizable whole and dramatizes the contribution that it made to American letters. Hawthorne's works form a cohesive

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[3] Hawthorne's Short Stories (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1946), p. ix.

[4] Ibid., p. vii.

body, moreover, despite their differences in theme and format because of the singleness of purpose with which he approached his art. This concept is aptly expressed by Mary Rohrberger: "Artistically, then, his purpose is to signify truth, rather than to profess it; to question the reality of appearance; by questioning at once, to cast doubt on that which is apparent; and to signify the timeless universal beyond the ordinary world of appearances."[5]

Hawthorne's innovative approach to literature, and his distinctive purpose, tied in with his experimentation with technique, form, and theme, changed the concept and direction of the sketch as an art form and elevated the developing short story to new heights. Hawthorne's contribution of over one-hundred essay-sketches, sketches-proper, and vignette sketches to the literature of the day played a vital role in the advancement of short fiction. Pattee has said,

> After Twice-Told Tales and Mosses from an Old Manse, the short story had no longer to apologize for its existence and live a vagabond life in the corners of weekly papers and the pages of lady's books and annuals; it had won so secure a place that even before Hawthorne had died The Atlantic Monthly, the constituted mouthpiece of the Brahmins of New England, could print seventeen specimens of it in its first volume.[6]

This statement sums up the total effect of Hawthorne's contribution to literature, and, more specifically, to short fiction.

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[5] "Hawthorne's Literary Theory and the Nature of His Short Stories," Studies in Short Fiction 3(Fall, 1965), p. 25.

[6] Development of the American Short Story, p. 110.

APPENDIX

CLASSIFICATION OF SKETCHES

ESSAY-SKETCHES

"About Warwick," *Our Old Home*
"Buds and Bird Voices," *Mosses from an Old Manse*
"Consular Experiences," *Our Old Home*
"Fire Worship," *Mosses from an Old Manse*
"Haunted Mind, The," *Twice-Told Tales*
"Leamington Spa," *Our Old Home*
"London Suburb, A" *Our Old Home*
"Lichfield and Uttoxeter," *Our Old Home*
"Near Oxford," *Our Old Home*
"Old Manse, The" *Mosses from an Old Manse*
"Old News," *Snow Image*
"Old Ticonderoga," *Snow Image*
"Old Tory, The," *Snow Image*
"Outside Glimpses of English Poverty," *Our Old Home*
"Pilgrimage to Old Boston," *Our Old Home*
"Recollections of a Gifted Woman," *Our Old Home*
"Snow Flakes," *Twice-Told Tales*
"Some of the Haunts of Burns," *Our Old Home*
"Up the Thames," *Our Old Home*

SKETCHES PROPER

"Bell's Biography, A" *Snow Image*
"Devil in Manuscript, The," *Snow Image*
"Earth's Holocaust," *Mosses from an Old Manse*
"Footprints on the Sea-Shore," *Twice Told Tales*
"Hall of Fantasy, The," *Mosses from an Old Manse*
"Intelligence Office, The," *Mosses from an Old Manse*
"Legends of the Province House," *Twice-Told Tales*
"Little Annie's Ramble," *Twice-Told Tales*
"Main Street," *Snow Image*
"Monsieur du Miroir," *Mosses from an Old Manse*
"New Adam and Eve, The," *Mosses from an Old Manse*
"Night Sketches," *Twice-Told Tales*
"Old Apple Dealer, The," *Mosses from an Old Manse*
"Old French War, The," *Snow Image*
"P's Correspondence," *Mosses from an Old Manse*
"Procession of Life, The," *Mosses from an Old Manse*

Sketches Proper - Continued

"Rill from the Town Pump, A," Twice-Told Tales
"Select Party, A," Mosses from an Old Manse
"Sights from a Steeple," Twice-Told Tales
"Sister Years, The," Twice-Told Tales
"Sketches from Memory," Mosses from an Old Manse
"Sunday at Home," Twice-Told Tales
"Toll-Gatherer's Day, The," Twice-Told Tales
"Village Uncle, The," Twice-Told Tales
"Virtuoso's Collection, The," Mosses from an Old Manse
"Vision of the Fountain, The," Twice-Told Tales
"Wives of the Dead," Snow Image
"Canterbury Pilgrims, The," Snow Image
"David Swan," Twice-Told Tales
"Edward Fane's Rosebud," Twice-Told Tales
"Egotism; or The Bosom Serpent," Mosses from an Old Manse
"John Inglefield's Thanksgiving," Snow Image
"Man of Adamant, The," Snow Image
"Seven Vagabonds, The," Twice-Told Tales
"Sylph Etherege," Snow Image
"The Threefold Destiny," Twice-Told Tales
"Wedding Knell, The," Twice-Told Tales
"White Old Maid, The," Twice-Told Tales

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