

IRONY
AS A MEANS OF
CHARACTERIZATION
IN
HAWTHORNE'S
THE HOUSE OF THE SEVEN GABLES

A Thesis

Presented to
the Department of English
Faculty of Arts and Letters
Sanata Dharma
Teachers' Training Institute



In Partial Fulfilment
of the Requirements of the
Sarjana Degree

by
Daniel Yuliadi

Yogyakarta
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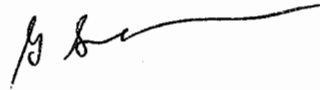
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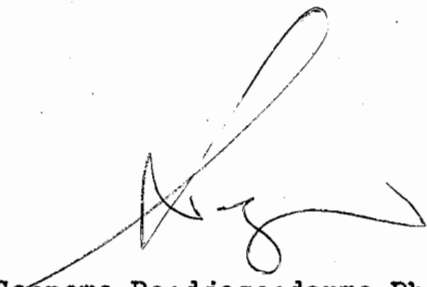
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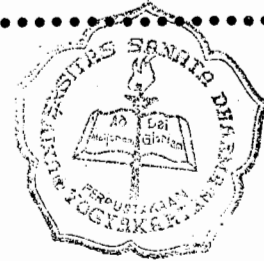
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PART ONE

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A study of the development of the American novel shows that, during the mid-nineteenth century, and in contrast to their European confreres, American writers suffered from a lack of material through which they could achieve memorable characterization. In his biography of Nathaniel Hawthorne, written in 1879, Henry James noted that Hawthorne's observations of American society, as recorded in his journals, revealed very thin raw material for a novelist:

It takes such an accumulation of history and custom, such a complexity of manners and types (said James) to form a fund of suggestion for a novelist. If Hawthorne had been a young Englishman, or a young Frenchman of the same degree of genius, the same cast of mind, the same habits, his consciousness of the world around him would have been a very different affair; however obscure, however reserved, his own personal life, his sense of the life of his fellow mortals would have been almost infinitely more various. The negative side of the spectacle on which Hawthorne looked out, in his contemplative saunterings and reveries, might, indeed, with a little ingenuity, be made almost ludicrous; one might enumerate the items of high civilization, as it exists in other countries, which are absent from the texture of American life, until it should become a wonder to know what was left. No State, in the European sense of the word, and indeed barely a specific national name. No sovereign, no court, no personal loyalty,¹ no aristocracy, no church, no clergy, no army, no diplomatic service, no country gentlemen, no palaces, no castles, no manors, nor old country houses, no parsonages, nor thatched cottages, nor ivied ruins; no cathedrals, nor abbeys, nor little Norman churches; no great Universities, nor public schools

¹personal loyalty: James is referring here to vestiges of the feudal system, in which each man owed personal allegiance to a nobleman, who in turn owed allegiance to the king.

--no Oxford, nor Eton, nor Harrow; no literature, no novels, no museums, no pictures, no political society, no sporting class--no Epsom, nor Ascot! Some such list as that might be drawn up of the absent things of American life-- especially in the American life of forty years ago, the effect of which, upon an English or a French imagination, would probably, as a general thing, be appalling.²

This paper will show how Hawthorne came to terms with this problem in his Romance, The House of the Seven Gables, published in 1851. Essentially, it will show that Hawthorne uses different techniques to characterize his main characters depending on their importance to the moral explicitly stated in the Preface: "the truth, namely, that the wrongdoing of one generation lives into the successive ones."³ The paper will thus begin with a brief biography of Hawthorne intended to show the origin of the theme in his life experience. Hawthorne himself felt that his immediate family was the victim of his ancestors' sins. Secondly, a brief analysis of the book's Preface will attempt to relate the theme to the structure of the plot. Thirdly, the paper will give a brief summary of the book's first chapter which tells the historical background of the living Pyncheons' plight-- the isolation of Hepzibah and Clifford, the greed of the Judge. Finally, the paper will treat its main topic, Hawthorne's characterization of the three Pyncheons mentioned above. Basically, it will show that while the author is content to describe Hepzibah and Clifford as the victims of isolation, he significantly resorts to the use of irony and

²Henry James, Hawthorne (New York: Dolphin Books), pp. 42-43.

³Nathaniel Hawthorne, The House of the Seven Gables (New York, 1965), p. xviii.

satire to characterize and judge his main character, the greedy Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon.

The House of the Seven Gables is partially autobiographical. Two ideas central to the theme were derived from Hawthorne's life itself. The first was Hawthorne's belief that his family's decline was a punishment for the sins of his ancestors. The Hawthorne family had lived in Salem, Massachusetts for six generations prior to Nathaniel's birth there in 1804.

William Hathorne--the w was added by Hawthorne himself, apparently to make the spelling conform to the pronunciation of the name--was that "steeple-crowned progenitor" who had come to Massachusetts with Governor Winthrop in 1630 and had played a prominent role in the early colony. His son, John Hathorne, became a lawyer and a judge of the special court which heard the evidence and passed sentences of death on nineteen witches in the famous trials held in Salem in 1692.⁴

Mark Schorer, in his American Literature, writes that John Hathorne had been denounced by an old woman's screams at her condemnation: "I am no more a witch than you are a wizard; and if you take away my life, God will give you blood to drink." The curse seemed to hover over the Hawthornes still. The family declined from positions of importance and lost its title deeds to large tracts of land granted it by the colonial government. Still, Nathaniel's first personal experience of his family's adverse fate was through the premature death of his father. Hawthorne's father lingered in the boy's memory as the sea captain who had died of a fever

⁴Edward H. Davidson, "Nathaniel Hawthorne" in Major Writers of America I, Perry Miller, ed. (New York, 1962), p. 684.

in far-off Surinam, north of the Amazon, when the boy was four, leaving a widow with three children to rear and educate.

Grief-stricken by her husband's death, the widow, at the age of twenty-eight, shut herself into her own room in a solitude that lasted most of the rest of her life, and the boy, like his two sisters, also fell into solitary ways. After graduation from Bowdoin college in 1825, where he was a classmate of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Franklin Pierce, Hawthorne returned to Salem to live with his widowed mother and two sisters.

Theirs was unsocial household which even during his early years had prevented his making friends of his own age. Now for twelve years he lived in relative seclusion with results he described in a letter of 1837 to Longfellow...: "I have been carried apart from the main current of life, and find it impossible to get back again....I have secluded myself from society; and yet I never meant any such thing, nor dreamed what sort of life I was going to lead. I have made a captive of myself and put me into a dungeon; and now I cannot find the key to let myself out--and if the door were open, I should be almost afraid to come out."⁵

Hawthorne felt that he was "redeemed" into humanity and returned to the "living world" as he calls it in The House of the Seven Gables through his marriage with Sophie Peabody.

Such was Hawthorne's life experience of the second important idea he worked in The House of the Seven Gables; namely, the debilitating effects of isolation. Remembering his dangerous tendency to break with the world, he constantly

⁵Norman Foerster and Robert Falk, American Prose and Poetry (Boston, 1960), p.398.

dealt with man's relations with his fellows. Often he pictured the difficulties of individuals cut off from society by oversensitiveness or aggressiveness. Newton Arvin's opinion about Hawthorne's solitary life is reflected in his book, Hawthorne's Short Stories (1955). He says that the simplest and truest thing of Hawthorne's human vision is that for him the essence of wrong is aloneness; we begin and we end with that. To err is to cut oneself off from "the whole sympathetic chain of human nature;" To suffer is to be merely on one's own. Solitariness, original or consequential, is his abiding theme and it is hard to believe that any writer, including writers greater than he, has ever had a more acute sense than Hawthorne had of the whole terrible meaning of the word "solitude."

Now, let us conclude our introduction with an explanation of the term "House" as used in our work's title. In ancient literature, "House" usually meant "Family". Ancient tragedy treated the fate of royal houses, that is, royal families. The House represented the ruling family which occupied it often for generations. Thus, Greek tragedies analyzed how the sin of a father plagued his "House". Oedipus suffers because he is a member of the House of Cadmus. His children, Eteocles, Polynices, and Antigone all suffer and perish in their turn because of their father's incest. Nor is the transmission of guilt limited to classical tragedies. That it moves the plot of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet is evident from the tragedy's opening lines in which the chorus says:

Two households, both alike in dignity,
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,

From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
 Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
 From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
 A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life;
 Whose misadventur'd piteous overthrows
 Doth with their death bury their parents' strife.⁶

The sin of the family extends to society in general. After being fatally stabbed in the first scene of the play's third act, Mercutio, a friend of Romeo, cries:

"A plague o' both your houses!"⁷

Richard H. Fogle, in his article on The House of the Seven Gables, makes this same point. He writes that The House of the Seven Gables is thoroughly relevant to the social, the psychological, and the religious history of colonial America and the young republic. It is family history as well, since the successful Pyncheons and the defeated Maules are simply two faces of the Hawthorne generations in Salem, Massachusetts. Fogle also states that the Judge is the American materialist. He sees that in the fortunes and the aspirations of the Pyncheons the principles of aristocracy and democracy in conflict in a young and growing society. He also sees that out of the American scene and problem there are also universal themes. The history of the Pyncheons repeats the Original Sin and the Fall of Man in indigenous Yankee terms. It issues from the crime of the original Maule. One discerns in it, also, the immemorial tragedy of a house, like Aeschylus' Oresteia, or the Oedipus trilogy.

⁶ Romeo and Juliet, Prologue, Louis B. Wright, ed., (New York, 1959)
⁷ ibid., Act III, Scene 1.

CHAPTER II

THE PREFACE

The House of the Seven Gables' moral concern, first evident in its being entitled "A Romance" is more fully explained in its Preface in which Hawthorne gives his reasons for choosing the romance mode. There is a slight difference between a Romance and a novel. Their main difference is in the way in which they view reality. Hawthorne distinguishes between "fact", in which the novel deals with, and "truth" which is the province of the Romance. He, at the same time, suggests an orientation in which "fact" is external and "truth" is internal. Briefly, Hawthorne clearly regards Romance as a work of literature dealing with internal matters. In the Preface Hawthorne undoubtedly points out that he finds the novel mode less suitable for his purposes since it aims, according to him, at a very minute fidelity, not merely to the possible, but to the probable and ordinary course of man's experience.

Hawthorne prefers the Romance since it allows the writer to present his truth to a great extent of his own choosing or creation. Hawthorne's other reason for using the romance mode is the freedom it gives him to treat "a legend prolonging itself, from an epoch now gray in the distance, down into our own broad daylight, and bringing along with it some of its legendary mist."⁸ Noting that a lot of writers put very great stress upon

⁸Hawthorne, pp. xvii-xviii

some moral purpose at which they aim their work, Hawthorne explains;

Not to be deficient in this particular, the author has provided himself with a moral--the truth, namely, that the wrongdoing of one generation lives into the successive ones, and divesting itself of every temporary advantage, becomes a pure and uncontrollable mischief; and he would feel it a singular gratification if this romance might effectually convince mankind--or indeed, any one man--of the folly of tumbling down an avalanche of ill-gotten gold, or real estate, on the heads of an unfortunate posterity, thereby to maim and crush them, until the accumulated mass shall be shattered abroad in its original atoms.⁹

Continuing, Hawthorne acknowledges first that when romances do really teach anything, or produce any effective operation, it is usually through a far more subtle process than the ostensible one. He then confesses that he has no intention to impale the story with its moral as by sticking a pin through a butterfly, thus at once depriving it of life. He intends, as he writes in the Preface, to show a high truth brightening at every step and crowning the final development of a work of fiction. This truth may add an artistic glory, and it is never any truer, seldom any more evident, at the last page than at the first.

⁹ibid., p. xviii

CHAPTER III

THE OLD PYNCHION FAMILY

Hawthorne begins his Romance with a chapter entitled "The Old Pyncheon Family." In this chapter, he recounts the early history of the family. An understanding of this 160 year history is essential to an appreciation of the action begun in the second chapter. Hawthorne's moral theme--"that the wrongdoing of one generation lives into the successive ones"--demands that he recount the story of Colonel Pyncheon's greed and the Maule curse before showing how they affect the characters of the Colonel's descendants, Hepzibah, Clifford and Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon. Hawthorne first gives the setting of his Romance, the old Pyncheon House shaded by the Pyncheon Elm standing on Pyncheon Street in one of the New England towns. He next explains that since a full account of the House's past includes a series of events extending over the better part of two centuries and fills a large volume, he will make short work of which the old Pyncheon House, known as the House of the Seven Gables, has been the theme. Continuing, Hawthorne explains that the real action of the tale is commenced at an epoch not very remote from the present day. Essentially, Hawthorne resorts to such an approach to express

...the little-regarded truth that the act of the passing generation is the germ which may and must produce good or evil fruit in a far-distant time; that together with the seed of the merely temporary crop, which mortals term expediency, they inevitably sow the acorns of a more enduring growth, which may darkly overshadow their posterity.¹⁰

Hawthorne begins the chapter, "The Old Pyncheon House"

¹⁰ibid., p. 4.

by giving a description of the setting of place. He explains that the House of the Seven Gables, antique as it now looks, is not the first habitation erected by civilized man. The site, with its natural spring of soft and pleasant water was previously occupied by Matthew Maule's hut. As the town grew, however, the Maule property became exceedingly desirable in the eyes of the greedy Colonel Pyncheon who asserted plausible claims to the proprietorship on the strength of a grant from the legislature. Colonel Pyncheon was characterized by an iron energy of purpose, while Matthew Maule was considerably stubborn in the defense of what he considered his right. The dispute over the ownership of the property remained for years undecided and was resolved only through Maule's tragic death. Maule, evidently with the collusion of the Colonel, was executed for the crime of witchcraft. His awareness that he was, in fact, the victim of the Colonel's greed, is evident from his last words from the scaffold. "'God,' said the dying man, pointing his finger with a ghastly look, at the undismayed countenance of his enemy, 'God will give him blood to drink!'"¹¹

After Matthew Maule's death, the Colonel appropriated the site and laid the deep foundations of his mansion, on the square of earth where Matthew Maule, forty years before, had first swept away the fallen leaves. Hawthorne next tells us that Thomas Maule, the son of the man whose property had been wrested, became the architect of the House of the Seven Gables. Still, Hawthorne warns us, the impression of its actual state, at the distance of a hundred and sixty years, darkens inevita-

¹¹ibid., p. 6.

bly through the picture which we would fain give of its appearance on the morning when the Puritan magnate bade all the town to be his guests, that is, on the morning on which the Colonel chose to celebrate the House's completion. On that morning, the chimney of the new house, belching forth its kitchen smoke, impregnated the whole air with the scent of meats, fowls, and fishes, spicily concocted with odoriferous herbs, and onions in abundance. The mere smell of such festivity, Hawthorne describes, making its way to every body's nostrils, was at once an invitation and an appetite.

Colonel Pyncheon was not to partake of the feast, however. An aura of mystery begins to surround the house as the guests assemble since the founder of this stately mansion, a gentleman noted for the ponderous courtesy of his demeanor, having left word that he was not to be disturbed and entering his study, had failed to emerge to welcome his guests, even the distinguished lieutenant governor. Impatient because the Colonel did not appear, the lieutenant entered the study, only to find the Colonel sitting motionless in an oaken elbow-chair beneath a portrait of himself. There was blood on his ruff and his hoary beard was saturated with it. In a word, the ironhearted Puritan, the relentless persecutor, the grasping and strong-willed man, was dead! Dead, in his new house! Hawthorne then tells us that there is a tradition that a voice spoke loudly among the guests. The tones of the voice were identified as of Matthew Maule, the executed wizard--"God hath given him blood to drink!" Clearly, the implication is that Thomas Maule had avenged his father's murder. The Maule curse had begun to haunt the Pyncheon House.

Hawthorne goes on to point out that the dead Colonel left his family well provided for.

It might fairly be anticipated that the progress of time would rather increase and ripen their prosperity than wear away and destroy it. For, not only had his son and heir come into immediate enjoyment of a rich estate, but there was a claim through an Indian deed, confirmed by a subsequent grant of the General Court, to a vast and as yet unexplored and unmeasured tract of Eastern lands. These possessions--for as such they might almost certainly be reckoned--comprised the greater part of what is now known as Waldo County, in the State of Maine.¹²

Still, at the Colonel's death, no deed to this property was found. Seemingly, his premature death prevented his obtaining one.

Efforts, it is true, were made by the Pyncheons, not only then, but at various periods for nearly a hundred years afterwards, to obtain what they stubbornly persisted in deeming their right. But, in course of time, the territory was partly regranted to more favored individuals, and partly cleared and occupied by actual settlers. These last, if they ever heard of the Pyncheon title, would have laughed at the idea of any man's asserting a right--on the strength of moldy parchments, signed with the faded autographs of governors and legislators long dead and forgotten--to the lands which they or their fathers had wrested from the wild hand of nature by their own sturdy toil. This impalpable claim, therefore, resulted in nothing more solid than to cherish, from generation to generation, an absurd delusion of family importance, which all along characterized the Pyncheons. It caused the poorest member of the race to feel as if he inherited a kind of nobility, and might yet come into the possession of princely wealth to support it.¹³

Still, each generation of Pyncheons was encouraged since there happened to be some one descendant of the family gifted with a portion of the hard, keen sense, and practical energy that had distinguished the Colonel himself. His character,

¹²ibid., p. 14.

¹³ibid., p. 14-15.

indeed, might be traced all the way down, as distinctly as if the Colonel himself. Whenever this descendant, representative of hereditary qualities appeared, the town gossiped, "Here is the old Pyncheon come again! Now the Seven Gables will be new-shingled!" However, seemingly the weight of the Maule curse on the Pyncheon conscience frustrated such hopes. Indeed, each inheritor of the property seemed to commit again the great guilt of his ancestor although he is conscious of wrong and of course he incurred all its original responsibilities. Accordingly, in a rhetorical question in which we recognize the Romance's theme, Hawthorne asks, in this case, whether it would not be a far truer mode of expression to say of the Pyncheon family that they inherited a great misfortune than the reverse.

Quickening the pace of his tale, Hawthorne goes on to tell us of the public's acute awareness of the Pyncheon's fate. The curse, which Matthew Maule flung from his scaffold, was deeply remembered with the very important addition that it had become a part of the Pyncheon inheritance. If one of the family did but gurgle in his throat, a bystander would be likely enough to whisper, "He has Maule's blood to drink." Moreover, the Colonel's picture not only remained on the wall of the room in which he died, but it seemed that his stern and immitigable features symbolize an evil influence. The ghost of the dead progenitor seemed to become the "Evil Genius" of the family.

The Pyncheons lived on. They possessed very distinctive characteristics and qualities of their own. They, nevertheless took the general characteristics of the little community in

which they dwelt, that is, a town noted for its frugal, discreet, well-ordered, and home-loving inhabitants. The most notable event to occur in the seventy years that had elapsed since the Revolution was that one member of the family was adjudged to have a criminal act on another. Clifford Pyncheon, the young nephew of the murdered man, was tried and convicted of the crime. Still, because of the high respectability and political influence of the criminal's connections, the sentence was reduced from death to life imprisonment. This murder occurred about thirty years before the beginning of the action of the story's second chapter. At this time, there are rumors that the imprisoned Clifford Pyncheon is about to be released.

The murdered Pyncheon had evidently realized that Matthew Maule had been cheated out of his homestead and unjustly condemned to death. Accordingly, the old bachelor was evidently determined to restore the property to the Maule descendants. People believed that the bachelor would have returned the House to the Maules had not the idea been so steadfastly rejected by his relatives. Still, it was feared that the bachelor would perform, after death, by the operation of his last will, what he had so hardly been prevented from doing in his proper lifetime. Such an action only shows that men rarely are able to hand down patrimonial property away from their own blood.

The Pyncheon property was thus inherited by a Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon, the dead bachelor's nephew and the cousin of the imprisoned Clifford Pyncheon who had been convicted of the murder. This Jaffrey Pyncheon resembled his ancestor, the Colonel, more than any of the previous Pyncheon descendants. Applying himself

in early manhood to the study of law, he had attained a judicial position in some inferior court, which gave him for life the very desirable and imposing title of judge.

Before opening his narrative, Hawthorne treats briefly the House's present appearance. He first mentions the Pyncheon Elm which had been planted by a great-grandson of the first Pyncheon, and, though now fourscore years of age, or perhaps nearer a hundred, it was still in its strong and broad maturity. Hawthorne then goes on to describe the dilapidated appearance of the Pyncheon mansion and property. His purpose in doing so is to symbolically express the moral decay attached to the Pyncheon family itself. Hawthorne's symbolism thus reflects the Puritan belief that God was immanently present in the natural world and that this world reflected His presence--or, as in the case of the sin-ridden family, His absence. This is Hawthorne's point in his description of the house, its immediate environment, even its occupant. All symbolize the effect of sin. Hawthorne writes:

On either side (of the house) extended a ruinous wooden fence of open latticework, through which could be seen a grassy yard, and especially in the angles of the building, an enormous fertility of burdocks, with leaves, it is hardly an exaggeration to say, two or three feet long. Behind the house there appeared to be a garden, which undoubtedly had once been extensive, but was now infringed upon by other enclosures.¹⁴

A final effect of time was the establishment of a shop at one of the doors of the House. Evidently, about a century before, the head of the Pyncheon became impoverished. Consequently, he considered that there was no better way to

¹⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 22-23

wealth than by cutting a shop door through the side of his ancestral residence. As the story begins, the impoverished Hepzibah Pyncheon, the only Pyncheon living in the House, is forced to open the shop once again.

CHAPTER IV

HEPZIBAH'S CHARACTERIZATION

It seems wise to begin the main part of this paper by noting that Hawthorne himself differentiates the material of the first chapter from that in the second. He does so by concluding the first chapter--essentially his account of Colonel Pyncheon's evil act--his greed--and Matthew Maule's vengeful act--the curse--with "And now--in a very humble way, as will be seen--we proceed to open our narrative." Still, Hawthorne's use of the word "narrative" meaning "story" is somewhat misleading. The reader is surprised to discover that while the first chapter summarized much action, little actually happens throughout the remainder of the book. The reason, obviously, is that the narrative is the story of the consequences of the Colonel's greed upon the characters of his descendants, Hepzibah, Clifford and Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon.

Characterization is essential to good writing. The writer has essentially four ways available to him. First, he may characterize a person through that person's comments about himself. Secondly, the person can be characterized through his actions. A third means of characterization is the comments of others on the person being characterized. Finally, the narrator himself may characterize the person. In his description of Hepzibah in the second and third chapters, Hawthorne makes use of each of these means to characterize her as a victim of Pyncheon greed and the Maule curse. Still, it is important to note that this characterization of the effects of greed upon

Hepzibah and not her actions is sufficient to express Hawthorne's theme. The following analysis is intended to show that characterization and not action dominates these two chapters.

Hawthorne uses the second chapter, "The Little Shop-window," to characterize Hepzibah Pyncheon as an exceedingly pitiful person. The chapter begins on the morning of the day Hepzibah, a recluse, prepares to open her shop. Hepzibah awakes, dresses, examines a miniature likeness of her imprisoned and soon to be released brother, Clifford. She then reluctantly sets about preparing the shop for her first customers. Thus, there is little action in this chapter. Hawthorne's main purpose is to characterize Hepzibah as the pitiful victim of Pyncheon greed. This point is clear from the chapter's final paragraph:

Our miserable old Hepzibah! It is a heavy annoyance to a writer, who endeavors to represent nature, its various attitudes and circumstances, in a reasonably correct outline and true coloring, that so much of the mean and ludicrous should be hopelessly mixed up with the purest pathos which life anywhere supplies to him. What tragic dignity, for example, can be wrought into a scene like this! How can we elevate our history of retribution for the sin of long ago, when, as one of our most prominent figures, we are compelled to introduce--not a young and lovely woman, nor even the stately remains of beauty, storm-shattered by affliction--but a gaunt, sallow, rusty-jointed maiden, in a long waisted silk gown, and with the strange horror of a turban on her head! Her visage is not even ugly. It is redeemed from insignificance only by the contraction of her eyebrows into a nearsighted scowl. And, finally, her great life trial seems to be that, after sixty years of idleness, she finds it convenient to earn comfortable bread by setting up a shop in a small way.¹⁵

The pace of the action increases little in the following

¹⁵ibid., p. 34.

chapter, "The First Customer," in which Hepzibah begins receiving customers. Indeed, Hawthorne's clearest purpose in arranging the customers is to provide for a more complete characterization of Hepzibah in her plight as a noble Puritan lady reduced to poverty and thus compelled to tempt her shop. The characterization proceeds in two distinct stages. The first, indicating that Hepzibah's difficult situation is something she has inherited, is achieved through Holgrave's visit to the shop. In response to his encouragement, she can only voice her pessimism.

"Ah, Mr. Holgrave," cried she, as soon as she could speak, "I never can go through with it! Never, never, never! I wish I were dead, and in the old family tomb, with all my forefathers! With my father, and my mother, and my sister! Yes, and with my brother, who had far better find me there than here! The world is too chill and hard-- I am too old, and too feeble, and too hopeless!"¹⁶

Hepzibah's belief that her misery results from the curse is clearly brought out in a subsequent exchange in which Holgrave, trying to encourage her, says:

"...if the Pyncheons had always acted so nobly, I doubt whether an old wizard Maule's anathema, of which you told me once, would have had much weight with Providence against them."

"Ah! No, no!" said Hepzibah, not displeased at this allusion to the somber dignity of an inherited curse. "If old Maule's ghost, or a descendant of his, could see me behind the counter today, he would call it the fulfillment of his worst wishes."¹⁷

Thereafter, the second stage begins when Hawthorne marshalls in a series of people to comment on the futility of Hepzibah's business endeavor. Two laboring men view her shop

¹⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 36-37

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 38.

from outside. To the one's inquiry whether Hepzibah will make the shop go, Dixey, one of the laboring men, replies:

"Make it go! ...Not a bit of it! Why, her face --I've seen it, for I dug her garden for her one year--her face is enough to frighten the Old Nick himself, if he had ever so great a mind to trade with her. People can't stand it, I tell you! She scowls dreadfully, reason or none, out of pure ugliness of temper!"¹⁸

The visit of schoolboy, Ned Higgins, to Hepzibah's shop to buy a gingerbread in the form of a Negro dancer named Jim Crow allows Hawthorne to comment more meaningfully on the significance of Hepzibah's selling. Ned pays Hepzibah with a single copper coin, the first she receives from a customer. Hepzibah puts the coin into the till and Hawthorne comments:

The sordid stain of that copper coin could never be washed away from her palm. The little schoolboy, aided by the impish figure of the Negro dancer, had wrought an irreparable ruin. The structure of the ancient aristocracy had been demolished by him, even as if his childish gripe had torn down the seven-gabled mansion. Now let Hepzibah turn the old Pyncheon portraits with their faces to the wall, and take the map of her Eastern territory to kindle the kitchen fire, and blow up the flame with the empty breath of her ancestral traditions! What had she to do with ancestry? Nothing; no more than with posterity! No lady, now, but simply Hepzibah Pyncheon, a forlorn old maid, and keeper of a cent shop.¹⁹

Ned followed by other customers--all assembled to characterize Hepzibah as an incompetent shopkeeper;

A little girl, sent by her mother to match a skein of cotton thread, of a peculiar hue, took one that the nearsighted old lady pronounced extremely like, but soon came running back, with a blunt and cross message that it would not do, and, besides, was very rotten!²⁰
.....

¹⁸ibid., p. 39.

¹⁹ibid., p. 43.

²⁰ibid., p. 44.

A round, bustling, fire-ruddy housewife of the neighborhood burst breathless into the shop, fiercely demanding yeast; and when the poor gentlewoman, with her cold shyness of manner, gave her hot customer to understand that she did not keep the article, this very capable housewife took upon herself to administer a regular rebuke.

"A cent shop, and no yeast!" quoth she. "That will never do! Who ever heard of such a thing? Your loaf will never rise, no more than mine will, today. You had better shut up shop at once."

"Well," said Hepzibah, heaving a deep sigh, "perhaps I had!"²¹

The point of the above description of Hepzibah--her ugliness her shyness, her ineptness--is to characterize her both as "a mildewed piece of aristocracy" and the victim of her family's greed. Such is the judgment with which Hawthorne ends the chapter, one voiced by a passing lady who thinks to herself:

"For what end," thought she, giving vent to that feeling of hostility which is the only real abasement of the poor in the presence of the rich, "for what good end, in the wisdom of Providence, does that woman live? Must the whole world toil, that the palms of her hands may be kept white and delicate?"²²

²¹ibid., p. 45.

²²ibid., p. 46.

CHAPTER V

CLIFFORD'S CHARACTERIZATION

Hawthorne's characterization of Clifford is remarkably similar to that of Hepzibah. Both are the victims of Pyncheon greed. This greed, in turn, has caused their isolation. Hepzibah has isolated herself in the House of the Seven Gables; Clifford, convicted of murdering his uncle, has been imprisoned for the last thirty years. Moreover, while we were repeatedly reminded that Hepzibah scowls, Clifford's most frequently cited characteristic is his insanity!

Nowhere is the effect of Pyncheon greed on a member of the family more evident than through a comparison of Hawthorne's description of Clifford as a young man, before being sent to prison, and after his release and return to the House of the Seven Gables. The picture of Clifford as a young man is that miniature examined by Hepzibah shortly after she awakens and mentioned above. We are told that the picture was of

...a young man, in a silken dressing gown of an old fashion, the soft richness of which is well adopted to the countenance of reverie, with its full, tender lips, and beautiful eyes, that seem to indicate not so much capacity of thought as gentle and voluptuous emotion.²³

Remarkably different is Hawthorne's description of the enfeebled Clifford after his release from prison. Describing him, Hawthorne writes:

No adequate expression of the beauty and profound pathos with which it impresses us is attainable. This being, made only for happiness, and heretofore so miserable failing to be happy--his tendencies so hideously thwarted that, some unknown time ago, the delicate springs of his character, never morally or intellectually strong, had given way, and he was now

²³ *ibid.*, p. 26.

imbecile--this poor, forlorn voyager from the Island of the Blest, in a frail bark, on a tempestuous sea, had been flung, by the last mountain wave of his shipwreck, into a quiet harbor.²⁴

Still, Clifford is sufficiently sane to realize that he, like Hephzibah, is the victim of the family's greedy past. He is both aware of the Colonel's evil influence upon his family and bold enough to voice his resentment of it to Hephzibah. After seeing the Colonel's portrait hanging in the House upon his return, he cried with no little force and distinctness:

"Hephzibah! Hephzibah! ...Why do you keep that odious picture on the wall? Yes, yes! That is precisely your taste! I have told you, a thousand times, that it was the evil genius of the house--my evil genius particularly! Take it down, at once!"²⁵

Clifford's condition improves slightly, especially due to the care of his visiting niece, Phoebe. Periodically, Phoebe accompanies Clifford out into the Pyncheon garden behind the House. This garden, like the House and its occupants, has suffered from neglect due, in turn, to the weakness of the family. That Hawthorne intends us to see both Clifford and the garden as victims of the inherited sin of the family is obvious when he describes the garden as "the Eden of a thunder-smitten Adam."

Reference has been made above to the role that isolation played both in Hawthorne's life and in his writings. The idea is important to an understanding of Clifford's fate. He must exit from the House and garden if he is to escape the sin of the past and find happiness. Still, as has been pointed out, Hawthorne himself experienced how difficult this reentry could be. Indeed, Hawthorne's point in "The Arched Window" is that, under

²⁴ibid., p. 119.

²⁵ibid., p. 93

their present circumstances, it is impossible not only for Clifford, but for Hepzibah as well. This is first shown when Clifford, standing at a balcony window, views a political procession passing below. Hawthorne prepares us to understand Clifford's reaction to the event by first explaining that a person isolated as he has been might regard the procession

...as a mighty river of life, massive in its tide, and black with mystery, and, out of its depths, calling to the kindred depth within him....It might so fascinate him that he would hardly be restrained from plunging into the surging stream of human sympathies.²⁶

Such, in fact, is Clifford's brief reaction. He starts from the window to jump from the balcony and into the crowd below Hepzibah's cry and question bring him to his senses. In reply, Clifford explains that he hardly knew nor feared anything. He thinks that had he taken the plunge and survived it, he would have been another man. Seconding Clifford's opinion, Hawthorne says:

Possibly, in some sense, Clifford may have been right. He needed a shock; or perhaps he required to take a deep, deep plunge into the ocean of human life, and to sink down and be covered by its profoundness, and then to emerge, sobered, invigorated, restored to the world and himself.²⁷

Still, the severity of Hawthorne's judgment of Hepzibah and Clifford's isolation is most clearly seen in the concluding incident of "The Arched Window." After watching neighbors pass to church one Sunday morning, Clifford asks Hepzibah if she

²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 139.

²⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 139-140.

never goes. She replies that she has never been to church for many years. Clifford expresses his eagerness to go to church to pray together with other people. It seems to him that he would be reconciled to God and man at once, after being separated for a long time, if he were at church and kneeled down among the people. Hepzibah realizes that there is a very strong impulse in Clifford to become part of human life. She then takes his hand and both of them make themselves get ready to go, expecting that the church door will be open for them. However, both of them are afraid to take one step farther after they have pulled open the front door and step across the threshold. They feel that all terrible eyes seem to be watching on them alone.

"It cannot be, Hepzibah! It is too late," said Clifford, with deep sadness. "We are ghosts! We have no right among human beings--no right anywhere but in this old house, which has a curse on it, and which, therefore, we are doomed to haunt! And, besides," he continued with a fastidious sensibility inalienably characteristic of the man, "it would not be fit nor beautiful to go! It is an ugly thought that I should be frightful to my fellow beings, and that children would cling to their mothers' gowns at sight of me."



They shrank back into the dusky passageway, and closed the door. But, going up the staircase again, they found the whole interior of the house tenfold more dismal, and the air closer and heavier, for the glimpse and breath of freedom which they had just snatched. They could not flee; their jailer had but left the door ajar in mockery, and stood behind it to watch them stealing out. At the threshold, they felt his pitiless gripe upon them. For, what other dungeon is so dark as one's own heart! What jailer so inexorable as one's self!²⁸

²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 142.

PART TWO

CHAPTER I

THE JUDGE'S CHARACTERIZATION

Having completed the first part of this paper, let us summarize our thesis before beginning the second part. We began by noting that mid-nineteenth century American writers found characterization difficult because of the nation's cultural poverty. Secondly, we have shown that Hawthorne's expressly stated theme in his The House of the Seven Gables--"that the wrongdoing of one generation lives into the successive ones"--demands that he characterizes the effects of sin upon his characters. Thirdly, we have shown that Hawthorne characterizes Hepzibah and Clifford Pyncheon as victims of sin through his direct and indirect description of them.

Now we will begin to treat the second and more interesting, if more complicated, characterization topic in the Romance, namely, Hawthorne's characterization of his main character, the greedy Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon. Descriptive characterization allowed Hawthorne to accomplish much towards the expression of his theme. Indeed, as will be shown shortly, he begins his characterization of the Judge with it. Still, we intend to show that Hawthorne obviously felt that this technique was inadequate to characterize the Judge and to provoke his readers' condemnation of the Judge's evil character. Thus, and this is the important point, to accomplish these ends, Hawthorne uses two other techniques to characterize the Judge; namely, irony and satire.

A. CHARACTERIZATION THROUGH PICTORIAL DESCRIPTION

While Hawthorne's description of Hepzibah and Clifford was to show that they are the victims of Pyncheon greed, Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon's role in the expression of the Romance's theme--the transmission of sin in the family--is his characterization as the perpetrator of the Colonel's greed. To accomplish this, Hawthorne must identify the Judge with the Colonel; in his characterization of them, he must emphasize their similarity. To achieve this similar characterization, Hawthorne uses the portrait of the Colonel hanging on the wall of the room in which he died. Above, we mentioned that, in his description of the portrait, Hawthorne tells that the Colonel's stern, immitigable features seemed to symbolize an evil influence. The ghost of the dead progenitor seemed to become "the Evil Genius of his family." Thus, not only does the portrait function to characterize pictorially the Colonel. It can be shown that through his description of the resemblance of the Judge with the Colonel in the portrait, Hawthorne succeeds in showing the essential unity of their characters, and thus, the transmission of sin in the family.

The first clear instance where Hawthorne uses the portrait to characterize the transmission of the Colonel's greed in his descendant, Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon, occurs in "A Day Behind the Counter" after Hepzibah has noted the Judge, whom she despises, walking past. She retreated to the back parlor, after seeing him, and paused before the portrait of the stern old Puritan, her ancestor, and founder of the house. Then, Hawthorne writes:

While gazing at the portrait, Hepzibah trembled

under its eye. Her hereditary reverence made her afraid to judge the character of the original so harshly as a perception of the truth compelled her to do. But still she gazed, because the face of the picture enabled her--at least, she fancied so--to read more accurately, and to a greater depth, the face which she had just seen in the street.²⁴

Not content to tell us that the Colonel's portrait helps Hepzibah better understand the character of Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon, Hawthorne goes on to point out that the reverse is also true. In "The Scowl and Smile," where the angered Hepzibah steadfastly rejects the Judge's request to meet with Clifford, Hawthorne emphasizes the resemblance between the living Judge and the Colonel in the picture when he writes:

Hepzibah almost adopted the insane belief that it was her old Puritan ancestor, and not the modern Judge, on whom she had just been wreaking the bitterness of her heart. Never did a man show stronger proof of the lineage attributed to him than Judge Pyncheon, at this crisis, by his unmistakable resemblance to the picture in the inner room.²⁵

B. CHARACTERIZATION THROUGH IRONY

Still, simple description of the Judge's character is insufficient both to characterize his greed and to win our condemnation of him. To do this, in the chapter entitled "The Scowl and Smile," Hawthorne uses a second technique to characterize the Judge; namely, dramatic irony. Hawthorne's characterization is dramatic since he gives a purely objective rendering of his material, without indulging either in editorial comment and generalization of his own or in the

²⁴ibid., p. 49.

²⁵ibid., p. 195.

analysis of the feelings and thoughts of his characters. We, the readers, infer the inner situation from the external action and dialogue. The characterization is ironic since the characters, Hepzibah and the Judge, perceive their situation in a limited way while we see it in greater perspective.

The analysis of the dramatic irony in "The Scowl and Smile" is essential to this paper since the chapter itself is an analysis of the character of the Judge. Essentially, the chapter recounts an argument between Hepzibah and the Judge. The Judge, despite Hepzibah's refusal, pursues his request to visit Clifford, maintaining that it was he who succeeded in getting Clifford released. Moreover, the Judge threatens to have Clifford recommitted to an asylum--on the grounds that he is insane--unless he reveals the whereabouts of their murdered uncle's missing deed. Hepzibah rejects his argument and accuses the Judge of being greedy and responsible for Clifford's imprisonment in the first place. Furthermore, she argues that the Judge is misusing his judicial powers to coerce Clifford into meeting his greedy ends. We, with our greater perspective, agree with Hepzibah. We appreciate the irony of the Judge's feigned filial concern for Clifford and condemn him for it.

Hawthorne opens "The Scowl and Smile" by immediately establishing the setting and tone of the action. Symbolically preparing us for the judgment theme of the following chapters, Hawthorne tells us that an easterly storm had set in, and indefatigably applied itself to the task of making the black roof and walls of the old house look more cheerless than ever before.

Continuing, he describes the storm's effects first on Hepzibah; then, on Clifford.

As for Hepzibah, she seemed not merely possessed with the east wind, but to be, in her very person, only another phase of this gray and sullen spell of weather--the east wind itself, grim and disconsolate, in a rusty black silk gown, and with a turban of cloud wreaths on its head.²⁶

.....
Hepzibah attempted to enliven matters by a fire in the parlor. But the storm demon kept watch above, and, whenever a flame was kindled, drove the smoke back again, choking the chimney's sooty throat with its own breath. Nevertheless, during four days of this miserable storm, Clifford wrapped himself in an old cloak, and occupied his customary chair. On the morning of the fifth, when summoned to breakfast, he responded only by a brokenhearted murmur, expressive of a determination not to leave his bed.²⁷

Hawthorne ends the preface to the real action of this chapter by noting that Clifford had bestirred himself in quest of amusement although he did not make his appearance belowstairs. In the afternoon, Hepzibah heard a note of music, which, she realizes, indicates that Clifford had begun playing a deceased relative's harpsichord stored near his upstairs' room.

Still, a more abrupt and foreboding transition awaits us as we read that a harsher sound succeeded to the mysterious notes and a foot was heard scraping itself on the threshold, and thence somewhat ponderously stepping on the floor. Believing that her visitor is none other than Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon, she hurries out.

Hepzibah's presentiment had not deceived her. It was no other than Judge Pyncheon, who, after in vain trying the front door, had now effected his entrance into the shop.

"How do you do, Cousin Hepzibah? And how does this most inclement weather affect our poor Clifford?" began the Judge; and wonderful it seemed, indeed, that the easterly storm was not put to shame, or, at any rate, a little mollified, by the genial benevolence

²⁶ibid., p. 187.

²⁷ibid., p. 188.

of his smile. "I could not rest without calling to ask, once more, whether I can in any manner promote his comfort, or your own."²⁸

Hepzibah, blunt and firm, tells the Judge that he cannot see him. Clifford, she tells the Judge, has kept in his bed since yesterday. Feigning concern for Clifford's health, the Judge asks if he is ill and insists her to let him see the sick man. Hepzibah's reply indicates that she not only rejects his concern, but that she holds him responsible for Clifford's imprisonment.

"He is in no danger of death," said Hepzibah, and added, with bitterness that she could repress no longer, "none; unless he shall be persecuted to death, now, by the same man who long ago attempted it!"²⁹

The dramatic argument on the Judge's character is now underway. Rejecting Hepzibah's characterization of him as evil, the Judge asks Hepzibah:

"...is it possible that you do not perceive how unjust, how unkind, how unchristian, is this constant, this long-continued bitterness against me. ...Ah, you little know me, Cousin Hepzibah! You little know this heart! It now throbs at the thought of meeting him! ...Try me, Hepzibah... try Jaffrey Pyncheon, and you shall find him true, to the heart's core!"³⁰

The Judge's hypocrisy infuriates Hepzibah who replies:

"In the name of heaven...in God's name, whom you insult--and whose power I could almost question since he hears you utter so many false words without palsying your tongue--give over, I beseech you, this loathsome pretense of affection for your victim! You hate him! Say so, like a man!"³¹

Not only does Hepzibah detest the Judge's hypocrisy. Her

²⁸ibid., pp. 189-190

²⁹ibid., p. 190

³⁰ibid., pp. 190-191.

³¹ibid., p. 191

remark below shows that she understands his evil character. She says that behind the Judge's charity, there is some black purpose against poor Clifford in his heart.

Hawthorne then breaks off the argument to comment ironically on the Judge's character. His irony is intended to confirm our condemnation of the Judge by exposing the falsity of public opinion, "the world's regard," for him. Beginning his own tentative analysis of the Judge's character, Hawthorne writes that the Judge was, beyond all question, a man of eminent respectability. The church and the state acknowledged it and it was denied by nobody. Then, to encourage us in our condemnation, Hawthorne adds:

And yet, strong as this evidence may seem to be, we should hesitate to peril our own conscience on the assertion that the Judge and the consenting world were right, and that poor Hepzibah, with her solitary prejudice, was wrong. Hidden from mankind --forgotten by himself, or buried so deeply under a sculptured and ornamented pile of ostentatious deeds that his daily life could take no note of it --there may have lurked some evil and unsightly thing.³²

Hawthorne then uses an emblem to help us analyze the Judge's character. He begins by pointing out that men of strong character are frequently materialistic. Then, he introduces his emblem by mentioning that

With these materials, and with deeds of goodly aspect, done in the public eye, an individual of this class builds up, as it were, a tall and stately edifice, which, in the view of other people and ultimately in his own view, is no other than the man's character, or the man himself. Behold, therefore, a palace!³³

³²ibid., p. 192

³³ibid.

Hawthorne's point is that public approbation of the Judge's character may be superficial--based on his material wealth. Then, he continues the emblematic analysis intended to point out that the nature of one's soul, and not the extent of his material possessions is the key to a man's character. He makes this point in his house emblem when he writes:

Ah, but in some low and obscure nook--some narrow closet on the ground floor, shut, locked and bolted and the key flung away...may lie a corpse, half decayed, and still decaying, and diffusing its death scent all through the palace! ...Here, then, we are to seek the true emblem of the man's character, and of the deed that gives whatever reality it possesses to his life. And, beneath the show of a marble palace, that pool of stagnant water, foul with many impurities, and, perhaps, tinged with blood--that secret abomination, above which, possibly, he may say his prayers, without remembering it --is this man's miserable soul!³⁴

Hawthorne goes on to explain his belief that the Judge may, in fact, not be aware of the wretched state of his character. Referring to his emblematic house analysis above and refraining from judging the Judge himself, he writes:

To apply this train of remark somewhat more carefully to Judge Pyncheon: We might say (without in the least imputing crime to a personage of his eminent respectability) that there was enough of splendid rubbish in his life to cover up and paralyze a more active and subtle conscience than the Judge was ever troubled with.³⁵

After listing the external characteristics of the Judge's life, Hawthorne asks what room would possibly be found for darker traits in a portrait made up of lineaments like those. Then, obviously intending to advance his analysis of the Judge's

³⁴ibid., p. 193

³⁵ibid.

character, he writes:

A hard, cold man, thus unfortunately situated, seldom or never looking inward, and resolutely taking his idea of himself from what purports to be his image as reflected in the mirror of public opinion, can scarcely arrive at true self-knowledge, except through loss of property and reputation. Sickness will not always help him do it; not always the death hour.³⁶

Hawthorne then permits Hepzibah and the Judge to resume their argument. The Judge, after repeating that it was he who set Clifford free, reveals the darker design of his visit. He says that he comes to the house to decide whether Clifford should retain his freedom. Continuing, the Judge begins to explain his greedy designs. He tells Hepzibah that at the death of their uncle Jaffrey, thirty years ago, it was found that his visible estate fell far short of any estimate ever made of it. He adds:

"By Uncle Jaffrey's last will and testament, as you are aware, his entire property was bequeathed to me, with the single exception of a life interest to yourself in this old family mansion, and the strip of patrimonial estate remaining attached to it.³⁷

To Hepzibah's questions whether he just seeks to deprive both Clifford and Hepzibah of the property and whether it is the price for ceasing to persecute Clifford, the Judge replies:

"No, no! But here lies the gist of the matter. Of my uncle's unquestionably great estate, as I have said, not the half--no, not one third, as I am fully convinced--was apparent after his death. Now, I have the best possible reasons for believing that your brother Clifford can give me a clue to the recovery of the remainder.³⁸

Hepzibah is astonished at the Judge's revelations and can only reply, "You are dreaming, Cousin Jaffrey!" The Judge's insis-

³⁶ibid., pp. 194-195.

³⁷ibid., p. 196.

³⁸ibid., p. 197.

tence in spite of Hepzibah's denials forces her to ask what happens if Clifford refuses or if he does not know anything about the wealth as what Hepzibah firmly believes. To this remark, the Judge finally fully reveals the devious designs of his visit. If Clifford will not comply with his demands, the Judge will have him judged insane and committed to a public asylum.

Hepzibah then lapses into an eloquent diatribe. Two points seem especially important. She first reminds the Judge that all Christians are subject to God's judgment at death and that he cannot have a long life ahead of him. Thus, she reminds him that he is not young anymore, nor middle aged, but already an old man. He has already white hair on his head and have lived for many years. Secondly, she condemns his greed as that which has brought grief to past generations of their family. She says:

"Alas, Cousin Jaffrey, this hard and grasping spirit has run in our blood these two hundred years. You are but doing over again, in another shape, what your ancestor before you did, and sending down to your posterity the curse inherited from him!"³⁹

Still, Hepzibah finally consents to summoning Clifford from his upstairs' room, but not before reminding the Judge that Clifford has no secret and that God will not let the Judge do the thing he meditates. The Judge's final words, however, not only indicate that he is unmoved by Hepzibah's moralizing. Hawthorne characterizes him as an iron-hearted Puritan who regards his discussion with Clifford as essentially a business matter to be settled as quickly as possible. As Hepzibah departs, he tells her that the time flies and asks her to bid

³⁹ibid., p. 199.

Clifford to come to him. Hawthorne then gives us our final picture of the living Judge by telling that the Judge had taken his watch from his vest pocket and now he held it in his hand, measuring the interval which was to ensue before the appearance of Clifford.

The action of the following chapter, "Clifford's Chamber," differs from that of the other chapters and, although it is highly significant, it can be briefly analyzed. The first problem, however, is to identify the action and its significance to the plot. Clearly, Hepzibah's action is not the most meaningful in the chapter. While she regrets that she has isolated herself from society and can appeal to no one for defence against the Judge's judgment of Clifford, this cannot be called the chapter's significant action. Nor is Hepzibah's search for Clifford himself particularly significant. Indeed, she finds him only after discovering his room empty and, returning downstairs, sees him looking at the Judge sitting motionless in his chair. Only with the realization that the Judge is dead and that Hawthorne intends us to see his death as the result of God's judgment--brought on by Hepzibah's prayer--do we realize that Hawthorne obviously intends us to find the prayer and God's subsequent judgment the significant actions of the chapter. Still, Hawthorne intends us to see the situational irony, that the wicked Judge who comes to judge Clifford is judged himself, as the consequence of the action of the preceding chapter, the characterization of the wicked Judge through dramatic irony. Now, let us analyze the chapter's situational irony in more detail.

Hawthorne first establishes a smooth transition into the action and meaning of the chapter by relating it first to the

previous chapter and then to the theme of the entire Romance when he writes that Hepzibah's

....colloquy with Judge Pyncheon, who so perfectly represented the person and attributes of the founder of the family, had called back the dreary past. ...The whole (Pyncheon family history) seemed little else but a series of calamity, reproducing itself in successive generations, with one general hue, and varying in little, save the outline. But Hepzibah now felt as if the Judge, and Clifford, and herself--they three together--were on the point of adding another incident to the annals of the house, with a bolder relief of wrong and sorrow, which would cause it to stand out from all the rest.⁴⁰

Reluctant to summon Clifford before the Judge and precipitate his tragic judgment, Hepzibah lingers at the arched window and regrets her isolation. Seeing Uncle Venner, she

...wished that he would pass yet more slowly, and befriend her shivering solitude a little longer. Anything that would take her out of the grievous present, and interpose human beings betwixt herself and what was nearest to her: Whatever would defer, for an instant, the inevitable errand on which she was bound--all such impediments were welcome. Next to the lightest heart, the heaviest is apt to be most playful.⁴¹

Hawthorne proceeds to analyze Hepzibah's train of thoughts.

First, he gives her impression of her archenemy, the Judge.

Never before had Hepzibah so adequately estimated the powerful character of her cousin Jaffrey--powerful by intellect, energy of will, the long habit of acting among men, and, as she believed, by his unscrupulous pursuit of selfish ends through evil means.⁴²

Hepzibah then thinks of the weak, innocent Clifford, victim of the approaching judgment. She holds out no hope for him.

⁴⁰ibid., pp. 201-202

⁴¹ibid., pp. 202-203

⁴²ibid., p. 203

Thus, as the Judge required an impossibility of Clifford, the latter, as he could not perform it, must need perish.

Hepzibah's appreciation of her helplessness deepens. Clearly, her problem results because she is a Pyncheon. For this reason, she isolated herself and has no friends to help her. Still, ironically, this descent is responsible for her falling victim to another Pyncheon, the Judge. Thus, reflecting on the approaching judgment, Hawthorne asks if there is no help in their extremity. He feels that there is none since, envisioning the approaching judgment, he sees The Judge on one side and the guilty Clifford on the other. Now, an indistinctly remembered ignominy. It is at this point that we realize that Hawthorne intends this chapter also to be seen as Hepzibah's self-judgment, her judgment of her own past errors. The judgment is particularly evident when she realizes that

In all her years of seclusion, she had never felt, as now, what it was to be alone. It seemed as if the house stood in a desert, or, by some spell, was made invisible to those who dwelt around, or passed beside it; so that any mode of misfortune, miserable accident, or crime might happen in it without the possibility of aid. In her grief and wounded pride, Hepzibah had spent her life in divesting herself of friends; she had willfully cast off the support which God has ordained his creatures to need from one another; and it was now her punishment that Clifford and herself would fall the easier victims to their kindred enemy.⁴³

It is at this point that Hepzibah turns to the only help she has--God himself--and prays. The prayer, we later realize, is efficacious. The Judge is judged--he dies--and Hepzibah and Clifford are saved. Still, it is difficult for Hepzibah to begin to pray.

⁴³ibid., p. 205

Returning to the arched window, she lifted her eyes--scowling, poor, dim-sighted Hepzibah, in the face of heaven!--and strove hard to send up a prayer through the dense gray pavement of clouds. Those mists had gathered, as if to symbolize a great, brooding mass of human trouble, doubt, confusion, and chill indifference, between earth and the better regions. Her faith was too weak; the prayer too heavy to be thus uplifted. It fell back, a lump of lead, upon her heart. It smote her with the wretched conviction that Providence intermeddled not in these petty wrongs of one individual to his fellow, nor had any balm for these little agonies of a solitary soul; but shed its justice, and its mercy, in a broad, sunlike sweep, over half the universe at once. Its vastness made it nothing. But Hepzibah did not see that, just as there comes a warm sunbeam into every cottage window, so comes a lovebeam of God's care and pity for every separate need.⁴⁴

Hepzibah's prayer and the resultant death of the Judge are thus important points of the chapter. Nothing else seems in need of analysis. After praying, Hepzibah goes to Clifford's room and finds it empty. Frantic with fear that he has perhaps drowned himself, she rushes downstairs to implore the Judge's help only to find Clifford looking at the dead Judge.

As Clifford stood on the threshold, partly turning back, he pointed his finger within the parlor, and shook it slowly as though he would have summoned not Hepzibah alone, but the whole world, to gaze at some object inconceivably ridiculous.⁴⁵

Hepzibah does not realize--as Clifford and we do-- that the Judge is dead. Fearing that Clifford's actions will only provoke the Judge's wrath, Hepzibah cautions him to be quiet. From Clifford's reply, it is clear that the Judge is dead and they are no longer in danger of his judgment. Clifford says:

"Let him be quiet! What can he do better? ...

⁴⁴ibid., pp. 205-206

⁴⁵ibid., p. 209

As for us, Hepzibah, we can dance now--we can sing, laugh, play, do what we will! The weight is gone, Hepzibah! It is gone off this weary old world..."⁴⁶

The truth slowly dawns on Hepzibah. Too astonished to share her brother's joy, she nevertheless flees the House together with him. Still, Hawthorne chooses to conclude the chapter by drawing out attention once again to his ironic character, the dead Judge. Hawthorne writes:

The brother and sister departed, and left Judge Pyncheon sitting in the old home of his forefathers, all by himself; so heavy and lumpish that we can liken him to nothing better than a defunct nightmare, which had perished in the midst of its wickedness, and left its flabby corpse on the breast of the tormented one, to be gotten rid of as it might!⁴⁷

C. CHARACTERIZATION THROUGH SATIRE

We are now ready to begin the final part of this analysis of Hawthorne's characterization of Judge Pyncheon. Before doing so, it is necessary to recall several points and to further explain others not yet clarified. Henry James, in his biography of Nathaniel Hawthorne, noted that America's cultural poverty placed severe limitations on her mid-nineteenth century writer's ability to characterize. We have mentioned this in the first page of this paper. Still, we have seen that in The House of the Seven Gables, and in spite of this problem, Hawthorne achieves a memorable and meaningful characterization of his main character, Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon. Indeed, his Romance is a classic precisely because of this characterization since it is the most meaningful expression of the Romance's moral--"the truth, namely, that

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 209-210

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 211-212

the wrongdoing of one generation lives into the successive ones." In the course of the book, we are constantly aware of the Judge's wrongdoing and through Hawthorne's ironic characterization of the Judge, we are forced to condemn it.

In our analysis of chapter fifteen, we saw that Hawthorne uses dramatic irony to characterize the Judge. Our analysis of chapter sixteen showed that through Hawthorne's use of situational irony, Judge Pyncheon is judged. We are then left both to account for and to explain the remaining chapter concerned with Judge Pyncheon, chapter eighteen entitled "Governor Pyncheon." Before we can analyze the structure and function of this chapter, however, we must answer the three related questions concerned with it below:

1. What cultural attitude in American culture enables Hawthorne to intensify his characterization of Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon?
2. Hawthorne has already used dramatic and situational irony to characterize the Judge. What other means is available to him?
3. The Judge dies in chapter sixteen. What does Hawthorne hope to accomplish with--what is the purpose of--the chapter-long judgment episode in the eighteenth chapter?

Now let us begin our analysis by first answering the above questions.

American colonization during the seventeenth century was largely the result of events associated with the English Civil War (1642-1646).

During the reign of Charles I, the peace of the Elizabethan Era was shattered by a devastating civil war. On the one side were the elegant Cavaliers who went to battle for the King, the Established Church of England, and the old luxurious life of the aristocracy. On the other were the Puritans who fought for

Parliament, a reformed church, and a simpler, less "sinful" way of life. Scarlet and plumes and Cavalier curls stood out in marked contrast to the dark, plain dress of Puritan protest. Wine, women, theater, and song vied with Bible readings, Sabbath walks, and the hard work required to run an ever growing world of commerce.⁴⁸

During the "Great Migration" of 1628-1640, about 25,000 persons including William Hathorne moved from England to the colonies of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Haven, and Hartford.

They were called Puritans because their leaders, many of them wealthy and educated, had wished to reform further, or "purify," the Church of England. Having failed to get their way, they decided to found commonwealths in America in which they could have what they felt to be the most desirable relation between church and state: a theocracy, or a state whose head would be God and whose laws would be those of God's words, the Holy Bible. The Puritans did not achieve a theocracy, but they did establish quickly and firmly a diversified economy under which New England grew and prospered.⁴⁹

Still, we are concerned here not with this history itself but with the lasting impact of Puritanism upon American culture. This has been succinctly expressed by Perry Miller, an outstanding scholar and an authority on the Puritans and their writings who, in the foreward to his book The American Puritans, writes:

Because their societies were tightly organized, and above all because they were a highly articulate people, the New Englanders established Puritanism--for better or worse--as one of the continuous factors in American life and thought.

⁴⁸ Robert C. Pooley, George K. Anderson, Paul Farmer, and Helen Thornton, England in Literature (Chicago, 1963), p. 6.

⁴⁹ Walter Blair, et. al., The United States in Literature (Chicago, 1963) p. 297

It has played so dominant a role because descendants of the Puritans have carried traits of the Puritan mind into a variety of pursuits and all the way across the continent. Many of these qualities have persisted even though the original creed is lost. Without some understanding of Puritanism, and that at its source, there is no understanding of America.⁵⁰

Thus, we have answered our first question and identified the cultural attitude which Hawthorne has and will continue to use to intensify his characterization of Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon. While Hawthorne could not use the cultural attitudes and devices available to his British contemporaries, he could --and did--successfully personify one of his most interesting characters as a greedy Puritan.

Having answered this question, we are prepared to move to the second; namely, "What means besides dramatic and situational irony could Hawthorne use to intensify both his characterization of the Judge and our condemnation of that greedy character?" Clearly, there is a similarity between the characterization of the Judge analyzed in chapter fifteen and that about to be analyzed in the eighteenth. The Judge personifies the Puritan myth of thrift, pragmatism, materialism. Still, his characterization in the eighteenth chapter differs in an important way. In the eighteenth chapter, while Hawthorne is essentially prolonging his characterization and judgment of the Judge another day, the tone of his characterization is different. During the important argument between Hepzibah and the Judge in chapter fifteen, we sided with Hepzibah who sought to protect Clifford from becoming a victim of the Judge's greedy judgment. As we sided with Hepzibah in her argument

⁵⁰ Perry Miller, The American Puritans (New York, 1956) p. ix.

we saw both the Judge's own opinion of himself and the public's opinion of him gradually analyzed. Still, and this is the important point, the tone of that argument and analysis was dead serious. The writer was being ironic. The situation and tone of the eighteenth chapter's characterization and analysis is quite different. The Judge no longer threatens anyone. He is dead! As Clifford told Hepzibah that they can sing, laugh, play, do what they will because the weight is gone. Thus, in the eighteenth chapter, while Hawthorne does use indirection, the ironic technique, when he encourages the dead Judge to arise and continue his greedy pursuits, we, the audience, since we know the Judge is dead, find the exhortation humorous. Thus, whereas Hawthorne began his analysis of the Judge's character with dramatic and situational irony, he concludes it in this eighteenth chapter with humorous irony, or satire. Thus, we have answered our second question.

Now, for the third question, "What is the purpose of the chapter-long satiric characterization of the dead Judge?" It is first necessary to recall what we said above in answer to our first two questions; namely, that the Judge is characterized as a greedy Puritan. The Puritan ethos in American culture is characterized--and condemned--through the Judge. This condemnation was the topic of the fifteenth chapter's dramatic irony. Still, whereas the irony of the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters elicits our judgment--our condemnation--of the Judge, this hardly can be the purpose of the satire. The Judge is dead! He has been judged, a judgment we fully concur with. Why prolong the matter? No, the purpose of the

satire is not to prolong the judgment, but to celebrate it! Still, in conjunction with the satire, Hawthorne uses yet another device to celebrate the Judge's condemnation; namely, the chronological order of the chapter. By both placing the dead Judge, whose greedy misuse of time has resulted in his condemnation, in the context of the larger temporal cycle, the afternoon, night and morning, God's eternal design of time, and by encouraging the immobile Judge to continue his greed, while drawing our attention to the phases in this cycle's inexorable progress, the narrator mocks the Judge's impotence and celebrates the supremacy of the universe's divine order over the human. This celebration, then, is the main purpose of chapter eighteen. Now let us turn to a more detailed analysis of the chapter itself.

Hawthorne begins the chapter by calling our attention to the Judge's sedentary position, one we recognize as being the same as that at the end of the sixteenth chapter when both Clifford and Hawthorne satirically implied that he was dead. The crucial observation, however, and the first of many, is that regarding time and the Judge's oblivion of it. Of the Judge, Hawthorne writes that he holds his watch in his left hand, but clutched in such a manner that we cannot see the dial plate. The following observation is yet more ominous. Hawthorne writes that the ticking of the Judge's watch is heard but not his breath. No doubt that the Judge is not asleep! We, of course, know that the Judge is not asleep. Moreover, we fully realize that since the narrator himself knows that the Judge is dead, he is being satiric.

The structure of Hawthorne's satire becomes clearer still when he turns his attention to the intended schedule of the Judge's activity on this morning of his death. He begins the analysis with the following significant observations. Again, he is being satiric. Hawthorne writes that the Judge was very busy on that day. He, first, would have the interview with Clifford and by his reckoning half an hour would suffice for that. Hawthorne then goes on to ask satirically:

Half an hour? Why, Judge, it is already two hours, by your own undeviatingly accurate chronometer! Glance your eye down at it and see! Ah! He will not give himself the trouble either to bend his head, or elevate his hand, so as to bring the faithful timekeeper within his range of vision! Time, all at once, appears to have become a matter of no moment with the Judge!⁵¹

Hawthorne's use of the Judge's scheduled activities is an efficient device for his satiric celebration of his demise. We recognize the scheduled activities which the Judge cannot carry out as the greedy schemes of the typical worldly Puritan. The essential point to realize is the following: while Hawthorne exhorts the Judge to continue his planned activities, we are fully aware that, since he knows the Judge is dead and cannot heed his advice, he is being satiric and actually using the consequent humorous tone to celebrate the Judge's inability to act. Thus, Hawthorne's exhortation that the Judge get up and carry out his "deep-laid schemes" for the morning, afternoon and evening of the day of his death continues through the next three and a half pages. In view of the

⁵¹Hawthorne, pp. 226-227

Judge's demise, we realize the vanity of his life--now ended.

On the morning and afternoon, after trying to compel Clifford to reveal the whereabouts of the deed, the Judge planned to pursue his other worldly interests. He planned to meet a State Street broker who would invest some of his money. Then, he intended to attend a real estate auction in an attempt to buy back some choice Pyncheon property. Still, later, he wanted to buy a horse, attend a meeting of a charitable society, buy a new tombstone for his deceased wife, buy some fruit trees, and see his physician about his health. His planned activity for the evening is even more indicative of his pursuit honor. He intended to attend a political dinner, contribute as much as five hundred dollars to his political friends, and be nominated a gubernatorial candidate for Massachusetts during the coming election. The narrator, feigning astonishment at the Judge's refusal to arise from his chair and attend this dinner, says:

Make haste, then! Do your part! The meed for which you have toiled, and fought, and climbed, and crept, is ready for your grasp! Be present at this dinner--drink a glass or two of that noble wine--make your pledges in as low a whisper as you will--and you rise up from table virtually governor of the glorious old State! Governor Pyncheon of Massachusetts!⁵²

Yet, all this is to no avail. The Judge does not move and Hawthorne asks him why he sits so lumpishly in his great-great-grandfather's oaken chair, as if preferring it to the

⁵²ibid., p. 230

gubernatorial one. Because we know that the Judge is dead, we realize that the narrator is intent on intensifying his satire. His satiric intent is most clearly evident in the quotation's final sentence:

Up, therefore, Judge Pyncheon, up! You have lost a day. But tomorrow will be here anon. Will you rise, betimes, and make the most of it? Tomorrow! Tomorrow! Tomorrow! We, that are live, may rise betimes tomorrow. As for him that has died today, his morrow will be the resurrection morn.⁵³

Darkness falls; the night begins. Still, the Judge does not move and Hawthorne, after noting that the Judge is not only oblivious of his watch but also of the "never-ceasing throb of Time's pulse," a clear reference to God's supreme rule of the universe, satirically finds the implication--that the Judge has been huddled--terrifying. He writes:

Is there no other sound? One other, and a fearful one. It is the ticking of the Judge's watch, which, ever since Hepzibah left the room in search of Clifford, he has been holding in his hand. Be the cause what it may, this little, quiet, never-ceasing throb of Time's pulse, repeating its small strokes with such busy regularity, in Judge Pyncheon's motionless hand, has an effect of terror, which we do not find in any other accompaniment of the scene.⁵⁴

It is at this point that Hawthorne introduces an appropriate and clever device to pass the night--and, most importantly, to celebrate satirically the end of the long history of Pyncheon greed. With the approach of midnight, Hawthorne recalls the ridiculous legend that, at midnight, all the dead Pyncheons are bound to assemble in the parlor of the house to see whether the portrait of their ancestor still

⁵³ibid., p. 231

⁵⁴ibid., p. 232

keeps its place upon the wall. Then, in key with the satiric tone he has been using, Hawthorne writes:

We are tempted to make a little sport with the idea. Ghost stories are hardly to be treated seriously, any longer. The family party of the defunct Pyncheons, we presume, goes off in this wise.⁵⁵

Hawthorne then lists the defunct Pyncheons as they appear. Essentially he is cataloging the entire history of Pyncheon greed. This is evident from Hawthorne's noting--humorously--that all the Pyncheons try the Colonel's picture. Later, we are told that the carpenter, Thomas Maule, has hidden the deed behind the portrait's frame. The important point is that, while, in death, the Pyncheon ghosts know the deed's location, and still exhibit a greedy interest in it, their demise places them outside of time and in a position where they are powerless to obtain the deed.

First comes the ancestor himself....He looks up at the portrait; a thing of no substance, gazing at its own painted image! All is safe. The picture is still there. ...But is that a smile? Is it not, rather, a frown of deadly import, that darkens over the shadow of his features? The stout Colonel is dissatisfied! ...Something has strangely vexed the ancestor! With a grim shake of the head, he turns away. Here come the other Pyncheons, the whole tribe, in their half a dozen generations, jostling and elbowing one another, to reach the picture. We behold aged men and grandames, a clergyman with the Puritanic stiffness still in his garb and mien, and a red-coated officer of the old French war; and there comes the shopkeeping Pyncheon of a century ago...and there the periwigged and brocaded gentleman...with the beautiful and pensive Alice... All try the picture frame. What do these ghostly people seek? A mother lifts her child, that his little hands may touch it! There is evidently a

⁵⁵ibid., p. 234

mystery about the picture, that perplexes these poor Pyncheons when they ought to be at rest. In a corner, meanwhile, stands the figure of an elderly man, in a leather jerkin and breeches, with a carpenter's rule sticking out of his side pocket; he points his finger at the bearded Colonel and his descendants, nodding, jeering, mocking, and finally bursting into obstreperous though inaudible laughter.⁵⁶

Continuing his jest, Hawthorne goes on to include the ghosts of the two most recent Pyncheons to have died, Jaffrey Pyncheon, the Judge's only surviving child, and Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon himself.

Finally, Hawthorne repeats that the ghost scene was imagined. He writes:

The fantastic scene just hinted at must by no means be considered as forming an actual portion of our story. We were betrayed into this brief extravagance by the quiver of the moonbeams; they dance hand in hand with shadows, and are reflected in the looking glass, which, you are aware, is always a kind of window or doorway into the spiritual world. We needed relief, moreover, from our too long and exclusive contemplation of that figure in the chair. ...Yonder leaden Judge sits immovably upon our soul. Will he never stir again? We shall go mad unless he stirs!⁵⁷

Hawthorne then gives his last satiric observation for the night when he tells us:

You may the better estimate his quietude by the fearlessness of a little mouse, which sits on its hind legs, in a streak of moonlight, close by Judge Pyncheon's foot, and seems to meditate a journey of exploration over his great black bulk.⁵⁸

Suddenly, morning arrives. The setting changes as does the mood of the narrator who draws our attention first to the failure of the Judge's watch and then to the passage of

⁵⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 234-235

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 235-236

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p. 236



heavenly Time. Note Hawthorne's optimism.

Thank heavens, the night is well-nigh past!
 ...What is the hour? Ah! The watch has at last
 ceased to tick....But the great world clock of
 Time still keeps its beat. The dreary night...
 gives place to a fresh, transparent, cloudless
 morn. Blessed, blessed radiance! The day beam
 ...seems part of the universal benediction, annul-
 ing evil, and rendering all goodness possible,
 and happiness attainable.⁵⁹

Hawthorne thus intends to use this morning to celebrate
 the Judge's demise and God's judgment. Before doing so, he
 satirically gives the dead Judge one last opportunity to re-
 form his evil ways. Continuing his satiric pretense, he
 first gives the two alternatives open to the Judge. He asks:

Will Judge Pyncheon now rise up from his chair?
 Will he go forth, and receive the early sunbeams
 on his brow? Will he begin this new day--which
 God has smiled upon, and blessed, and given to
 mankind--will he begin it with better purposes
 than the many that have been spent amiss? Or are
 all the deep-laid schemes of yesterday as stubborn
 in his heart, and as busy in his brain, as ever?
 In this latter case, there is much to do.⁶⁰

Hawthorne then goes on to list again "the deep-laid
 schemes" which the Judge, were he still alive, might still
 attempt. He asks:

Will the Judge still insist with Hepzibah on the
 interview with Clifford? Will he buy a safe, elder-
 ly gentleman's horse? Will he persuade the pur-
 chaser of the old Pyncheon property to relinquish
 the bargain, in his favor? Will he see his family
 physician...? Will Judge Pyncheon, above all, make
 due apologies to that company of honorable friends,
 and satisfy them that his absence from the festive
 board was unavoidable, and so fully retrieve himself
 in their good opinion that he shall yet be Governor
 of Massachusetts?⁶¹

⁵⁹ibid.

⁶⁰ibid., pp. 236-237

⁶¹ibid., p. 237

Fully realizing that the second possibility is as remote as the first, if indeed, more desirable, Hawthorne nevertheless asks:

Or will he, after the tomblike seclusion of the past day and night, go forth a humbled and repentant man, sorrowful, gentle, seeking no profit, shrinking from worldly honor, hardly daring to love God, but bold to love his fellow man, and to do him what good he may? Will he bear about with him no odious grin of feigned benignity... but the tender sadness of a contrite heart, broken at last, beneath its own weight of sin? For it is our belief, whatever show of honor he may have piled upon it, that there was heavy sin at the base of this man's being.⁶²

Seemingly desiring that the Judge should heed his advice and repent his greedy past, Hawthorne knows fully well that the Judge cannot and celebrates the fact when he makes his final eloquent appeal:

Rise up, Judge Pyncheon! The morning sunshine glimmers through the foliage, and, beautiful and holy as it is, shuns not to kindle up your face. Rise up, thou subtle, worldly, selfish, ironhearted hypocrite, and make their choice whether still to be subtle, worldly, selfish, ironhearted, and hypocritical, or to tear these sins out of thy nature, though they bring the lifeblood with them! The Avenger is upon thee! Rise up, before it is too late!⁶³

Fully aware that it is too late, Hawthorne cannot resist one last satiric observation to celebrate that the Judge is not only dead, but decaying! When the Judge does not heed his last appeal, he asks:

What! Thou art not stirred by this last appeal? No, not a jot! And there we see a fly--one of your common houseflies, such as are always buzzing on the windowpane--which has smelt out Governor Pyncheon, and alights, now on his forehead, now on his chin, and now, heaven help us! is creeping over the bridge of his nose, towards the would-be chief magistrate's wide-open eyes! Canst thou not brush the fly away?

⁶²ibid.

⁶³ibid.

Art thou too sluggish? Thou man, that hadst so many busy projects yesterday! Art thou too weak, that wast so powerful? Not⁶⁴ brush away a fly? Nay, then, we give thee up!

Thus, Hawthorne concludes his judgment of the Judge. He began his analysis of the Judge by using dramatic irony to analyze the Judge's character and elicit our condemnation of it. Secondly, he used situational irony to emphasize God's judgment of the Judge. Finally, he used satire to celebrate that judgment. Having thus purged the Pyncheon family of the Judge, the last agent of its curse, Hawthorne concludes the chapter on a brighter note. He writes:

And hark! The shop bell rings. After hours like these latter ones, through which we have borne our heavy tale, it is good to be made sensible that there is a living world, and that even this old, lonely mansion retains some manner of connection with it. We breathe more freely, emerging from Judge Pyncheon's presence into the street before the Seven Gables.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ibid., pp. 237-238

⁶⁵ibid., p. 238

CHAPTER II

CONCLUSION

We are thus essentially finished with our analysis of Hawthorne's characterization of Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon. Before concluding our paper, however, let us quickly review our analysis. This review, besides contributing to the clarity of the paper, will allow us to relate the Judge's characterization to the theme and plot of the Romance. It will thus enable us to see the broader significance of the characterization we have just analyzed.

We began by noting that meaningful characterization was difficult for mid-nineteenth century American writers. America was still a young nation, one which since 1700 had ceased to be dominated by a Puritan hierarchy and since 1776 was free of its British king. By 1850, not only were both Puritanism and Colonialism part of American history, but America's newly discovered ability to tap her own natural resources was enabling her to industrialize. This, in turn, enabled her own cultural development to acquire momentum. Still, one of the few clearly distinctive cultural attitudes that her writers could use to create a truly significant character was indeed that which Hawthorne uses in his Romance; namely, American Puritanism. Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon personifies this cultural attitude. His Puritanism is the essence of his character, that which makes him both meaningful and interesting to the American reader.

However, a second significant aspect which we must account for is Hawthorne's clearly unfavorable characterization of the Judge. Theoretically, he could have characterized him as a

pious Puritan. We must explain why he does not. The first reason is clearly that Puritanism was no longer the major religion of mid-nineteenth century America. It continued to exert a tremendous secular influence upon American culture as the Puritan work ethic exemplified in the scheduled activities of Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon. Even though mid-nineteenth century America was greatly motivated by materialism achieved through the Puritan work ethic--the quest for wealth not for eternal reward but for the sake of wealth itself--many Americans, including Hawthorne, found the greedy Puritan materialist repugnant.

Hawthorne's biography provides a second reason for his taking a critical view of Puritanism. To some extent, he felt his immediate family's misfortunes the result of the sins of his Puritan ancestors. Indeed, Hawthorne made this idea, "the truth, namely, that the wrongdoing of one generation lives into the successive ones," the theme of his Romance. While this awareness is the source of the book's theme, it also colors Hawthorne's characterization of the Judge. He is characterized as a greedy, hypocritical, secular Puritan. This point, in turn, leads us into the next significant observation on Hawthorne's characterization of the Judge. Hawthorne not only characterizes the Judge. In doing so, he also criticizes him, that is, he judges, condemns him. To do this, he first uses irony; then, intensifying his criticism, satire.

Finally, having related the Judge's characterization to the Romance's theme, let us relate his characterization to the plot. It is important to point out first that while the Romance's first chapter treats the origin of the curse, chapters two through eighteen treat the effect of the curse upon the

characters of Hepzibah, Clifford and the Judge. Only with the completion of chapter eighteen, the satiric celebration of the Judge's demise, are the living Pyncheons free to move into the "living world." Only then does Hawthorne's interest revert to action, that is, to plot development. Still, seemingly, Hawthorne has spent too much time analyzing the Judge's character and too little making the other characters credible. They suffer as a result. Thus, the plot action treated in the Romance's remaining three chapters is brief and anticlimactic. Hepzibah and Clifford inherit the Judge's wealth and move out of the House of the Seven Gables and into the country. Phoebe and Holgrave suddenly fall in love and intend to marry. The romantic setting and tone of the last chapter encourages us to believe that they lived happily ever after.

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