HAWTHORNE, JAMES AND THE "CLUSTER OF APPURTENANCES"

HAWTHORNE, JAMES AND THE "CLUSTER OF APPURTENANCES": A COMPARISON OF THE HOUSE OF THE SEVEN GABLES AND THE SPOILS OF POYNTON

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ABSTRACT

The House of the Seven Gables and The Spoils of Poynton are comparable primarily in the manner in which Hawthorne and James focus on 'relationships'. The reader usually perceives characters in their relationships to other characters. Furthermore, through the major device of the house, Hawthorne and James compare characters to their settings, indicating the important effect of each upon the other. In the works under discussion, therefore, James and Hawthorne are strongly tied together by their methods of composition.

Chapter One deals with some of the general theories critics have employed to compare the fiction of Hawthorne and James, and these criticisms are applied to the specific comparison of The House of the Seven Gables and The Spoils of Poynton. In Chapter Two, the relevant comments of Hawthorne on The House of the Seven Gables, and James, both on Hawthorne's work and The Spoils of Poynton, are examined. The two works are directly compared and contrasted in Chapter Three.

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INTRODUCTION

A major problem in examining any works by different authors is to determine the most suitable basis of comparison. For this reason, I have in the beginning chapter scrutinized some of the general comments of critics who are convinced that a definite connecting link exists between the fiction of Hawthorne and the fiction of James, and I have attempted to apply their statements to the specific comparison of The House of the Seven Gables and The Spoils of Poynton. Similarly, the commentary of Hawthorne on The House of the Seven Gables, and the opinions of James, both on The Spoils of Poynton and on Hawthorne's romance, are carefully studied in the second chapter. Thus the first and second chapters serve as a necessary background for the topic and supply a number of methods to compare The House of the Seven Gables and The Spoils of Poynton. To an extent, therefore, the opening chapters form a framework for the third and most important chapter, where the works under discussion are explored.

To my knowledge, The House of the Seven Gables and The Spoils of Poynton have not been extensively compared, as other works by the authors have. This strikes one as curious, because the crucial bond between the two books, the house, appears to be so central to both works. Certainly, what James and Hawthorne do with the image of the house, and the 'role' that they make the house 'play', is often radically

different. From one standpoint, therefore, this makes the study of the houses an easily accessible and beneficial way to contrast the authors, illustrating their differences in temperament and style. The similarities, however, seem to outweigh the differences and it is on these likenesses that the greater part of this paper is focused. Thus the object of this paper is to raise an inquiry concerning the possible influence of The House of the Seven Gables on The Spoils of Poynton, and hence, from this specific comparison, to add to the general critical material analysing the relationship between the art of Hawthorne and James.

James's use of the house as the primary setting and as a key structural device is certainly not confined to The Spoils of Poynton. The function of the mansion in "The Turn of the Screw" and the empty home in "The Jolly Corner" is extremely important, and in both stories the houses are encircled with a psychological and, with their apparent ghosts, a gothic atmosphere which is reminiscent of Hawthorne's The House of the Seven Gables. In the fiction of Hawthorne and James, we may not regard houses as mere 'backdrops' for the characters and their activities. They are placed in enough proximity to all events and actions to make us regard them, in one form or another, as 'centres' of the stories. This is clearly displayed in James's The Portrait of a Lady. Here, as will be observed in The Spoils of Poynton and The House of the Seven Gables, houses are

seen and studied in opposition to each other. The spacious and affable grounds of Gardencourt provide a direct contrast to Osmond's house where the cramped and stifling atmosphere creates the impression that "once you were in, you would need an act of energy to get out."[I]

In The Portrait of a Lady, James revealed important bridges between characters and their homes. One learns a great deal about the character of Mr. Touchett and Gilbert Osmond simply by observing their homes. In conversation with Isabel, Madame Merle draws our attention to this significant fact.

> 'I don't care anything about his house,' said Isabel.
> 'That's very crude of you. When you've lived as long as I you'll see that every human being has his shell and that you must take the shell into account. By the shell I mean the whole envelope of circumstances. There's no such thing as an isolated man or woman; we're each of us made up of some cluster of appurtenances. What shall we call our 'self'? Where does it begin? where does it end? It overflows into everything that belongs to us -- and then it flows back again. I know a large part of myself is in the clothes I choose to wear. I've a great respect for things! One's self -- for other people -- is one's expression of one's self; and one's house, one's furniture, one's garments, the books one reads, the company one keeps -- these things are all expressive.' 2

The above quotation is obviously applicable to The Spoils of Poynton and The House of the Seven Gables where the houses assume an even larger position than in The Portrait of a Lady. In the former works, it will be seen how the houses reflect upon their owners, and relatedly, how the house, inheriting the qualities of its occupants, "flows back" and shapes the

thoughts and actions of the people who are associated with it. "Things are all expressive," -- Madame Merle's statement, I believe, is illustrative of the crucial viewpoint James shares with Hawthorne. A character must always be related to surrounding forces or "expressions." Thus in the works under discussion it is often difficult and sometimes impossible to separate a character from a house, or a house from a character, and any examination of these works must concentrate on this relationship. The effect of this creative method on the works under discussion will be considered in the following chapters.

Notes to Introduction

1 Henry James, *The Portrait of a Lady*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1963), p. 213.

2 Henry James, *The Portrait of a Lady*, pp. 172, 173.

CHAPTER ONE

Before specifically comparing *The House of the Seven Gables* and *The Spoils of Poynton*, it will be useful, both as an overview and as a possible basis of comparison for the works under discussion, to examine the general methods critics have brought forward to compare James and Hawthorne. F. O. Matthiessen, in *The American Renaissance*, states that Hawthorne's influence upon James is most strongly seen in James's early and late stages. In James's early works, his debt to Hawthorne is reflected by both style and theme ("The Romance of Certain Old Clothes" and "The Last of the Valerii" are good examples). No such direct connections may be found when examining the later works -- on which *The Spoils of Poynton*, published in 1897, borders -- but Matthiessen states that a major characteristic of the last novels is "their magnificently sustained symbolism. Certainly there is no question of any specific debts to Hawthorne at this point, but of a fundamental reassertion of kinship in moral values, which defied for both writers any merely realistic presentation."[I] Thus, Matthiessen theorizes that James was slowly moving away from the more 'realistic' style of *The Portrait of a Lady*, *The Bostonians* and *The Princess Casamassima* and, undoubtedly, the almost infinite mazes of symbols and images that are found in *The Ambassadors*, "The Jolly Corner" and

"The Beast in the Jungle" distinguishes them, not in kind but in degree, from James's former works.

Clearly, The Spoils of Poynton belongs much more to the 'later period' than to the former periods. Practically every page in the novel indicates and reinforces a series of major image clusters. The characters and their actions, it will be seen, are surrounded by images of battle, flight and religious devotion. Similarly, the entire foundation of Hawthorne's work is integrally supported by and dependent upon images of light and darkness, angles and circles, and isolation and reunion, to name but a few. Both works are in fact bombarded by images and symbols, and while it will do little good to compare one image in one book to one image in another, one may safely state that Hawthorne and James are joined by the manner in which they employ their images and symbols. In both The House of the Seven Gables and The Spoils of Poynton, characters' actions are not fully appreciated until one closely examines the imagery that usually accompanies each act. Usually, its primary function is to illuminate the relationship between one character and another, or between a character and the surrounding objects or "expressions." The underlying patterns of images, moreover, will often tell the reader more about the character than can be perceived through any other means, because both authors regularly use their images as emblems of the unconscious workings of their characters' minds.

The most extensive study of the influence of Hawthorne upon James is Marius Bewley's The Complex Fate. In this work, he directly compares particular works of Hawthorne to those of James. From such an examination, Bewley concludes that James either consciously or unconsciously reworked the often "hazy" concerns of Hawthorne into a more powerful artistic statement and form.[2]

In order to study Bewley's methods of comparison it will be necessary to briefly examine the ways he relates The Bostonians to Hawthorne's The Blithedale Romance before discerning if such a method is feasible for a comparison of The House of the Seven Gables and The Spoils of Poynton. The strands connecting the two former works are, according to Bewley, easily apparent. Hollingsworth shares certain affinities with Basil Ransom, Westervelt is similar to Selah Tarrant, and the relationship between Zenobia and Priscilla is comparable to that of Olive and Verena. Bewley states that James reconstructed the nature of Hawthorne's characters to comply with his "more thorough scheme of things." Selah Tarrant is a more 'believable' character than Westervelt because he lacks Westervelt's "gothicism", and the other Bostonians have taken on a more human, less fantastic shape. Furthermore, The Bostonians is without the type of symbolism Hawthorne often employed, such as the mystic veil, which Bewley regards as a "vulgar violation."[3] Hence James moved his drama, both by tone and characterization, closer to 'reality'.

Certainly, when comparing The Spoils of Poynton and The House of the Seven Gables, it will be seen that James offers characters who strike one as being more thoroughly conceived than Hawthorne's. F. O. Matthiessen writes that in The House of the Seven Gables, Hawthorne, in creating his characters, could "manage no more than to give a careful notation of their traits -- as we have just seen with Holgrave -- instead of revealing them gradually through significant incidents. Even in their conflicts with one another, description nearly always usurps the place of immediate action."[4] If Hawthorne displays a 'weakness' in his methods of characterization, it is that some of his characters, Phoebe and Holgrave for example, strike the reader as authorial abstractions, employed more to signify a particular point or frame of mind than to exist as well rounded characters. James, of course, with his thorough methods of developing both characters and their actions and his insistent argument for as complete a representation of life as possible, avoided Hawthorne's ways of building character.[5] A character with the complexities of Fleda Vetch will not be found in any of Hawthorne's works. The manner in which Hawthorne and James create characters constitutes perhaps the greatest difference in their artistic methods. This difference is most fully viewed in Chapter Two, where critical writings by the authors are compared and contrasted.

However, as Matthiessen stated earlier, a feature

that brings the later work of James closer to Hawthorne is its abundance of symbolism. The Spoils of Poynton does not contain the 'realistic' mode of presentation that Bewley ascribes to The Bostonians and other works, or, at least, James's 'realism' has been transformed to accommodate the 'point of view' technique, with its highly charged patterns of symbols and images, that is found in the later works. Like Lambert Strether in The Ambassadors, the action, in The Spoils of Poynton, is seen through the eyes and assimilated in the mind of the leading character. James's portrayal of the workings of Fleda's mind might be termed as realistic, but Fleda's method of thinking, like Strether's, is partially ruled by her romantic fantasies. Thus James avoided what he considered to be some of the pitfalls of Hawthorne's romantic style by 'realistically' building the character of Fleda Vetch, but at the same time, surrounding her thought processes, in order to create psychological veracity, with such a web of symbols and images that she stands as a character much closer to Hawthorne's fiction than to the purely naturalistic realism of Balzac and Zola.

The theme of dominance, the evil relationship that develops when the strength of one individual forces another individual into helpless submission, plays a major role in Bewley's comparative criticism. In The Blithedale Romance, this theme emerges in three relationships -- Westervelt and Zenobia, Zenobia and Priscilla and Hollingsworth and Zenobia.

Bewley states that this has been compressed by James, in The Bostonians, to the relationship between Olive Chancellor and Verena. Thus James, by means of clarification, has created a fullness of development that Hawthorne fails to match. "James's understanding of how to relate the characters to each other, how much substance and 'interest' to give them, precisely how to define their respective functions, could not be improved upon. His 'rearrangements' introduce the brightest clarity into the Blithedale shadows and confusion."[6]

To a certain degree, similar conclusions may be drawn from a comparison of The House of the Seven Gables and The Spoils of Poynton. The House of the Seven Gables contains a series of relationships where one individual dominates and at times threatens to crush another individual. Such is the case with Jaffrey Pyncheon in regard to both Hepzibah and Phoebe, and although Clifford and Jaffrey do not come in contact with one another during the time scale of the romance, one is definitely made aware of the dangers of the powerful preying upon the weak in relation to these two cousins. As well, there is more than a faint hint of a similar danger in the interactions of Holgrave and Phoebe, even though nothing happens, and the largest example of domination is reserved for their ancestral counterparts, Alice and Maule. Maule, due to his knowledge of sorcery, commands complete control over Alice, whose only fault, Hawthorne informs us, was that she was "very proud."

Maule's cruel orders, however, leave no room for pride. "Thus all dignity of life was lost. She felt herself too much abased, and longed to change natures with some worm!" (244)* In The Spoils of Poynton, there appears to be only one such relationship, that between Mrs. Gereth and Fleda, which in many ways parallels the dominating relationship between Olive and Verena in The Bostonians.

If James, however, was deliberately "reworking" and "clarifying" the themes of The House of the Seven Gables in The Spoils of Poynton, one would expect some definite similarities in characterization, similarities such as Bewley claims to have found existing between The Blithedale Romance and The Bostonians. Judge Pyncheon's dominating and perverse character is shaped by his desire for wealth. Because of it, he sends Clifford to prison and threatens the remaining Pyncheons to unearth the whereabouts of an assumed hoard of treasure. His greed is traced back to Colonel Pyncheon. In a similar manner, Mrs. Gereth attempts to hoard the things at Poynton. Greed motivates both characters. Furthermore, Mrs. Gereth's wish to pass on the spoils to Fleda is similar to Colonel Pyncheon's attempt to create a secure and lasting abode for his descendants.

Phoebe and Fleda are partially comparable. Both are

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* All references to The House of the Seven Gables are from The Best Known Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, New York: Blue Ribbon Books, 1941. Parenthetic numerals indicate page numbers.

'innocents' and both are threatened by those who are stronger in will than themselves. Phoebe, however, functions only as a contrasting point to the house and its occupants. She appears more as a bringer of 'light' and salvation than as a well developed character, whereas Fleda forms the centre of consciousness. We may not regard Fleda from a one dimensional point of view. In fact, Fleda appears just as comparable to Jaffrey as to Phoebe. Like Jaffrey, she blunders blindly along in her fantasizing and her hidden desire for beauty (which in turn is reminiscent of Clifford), leading to a form of egotistical hoarding. By the end of the book, we see that Fleda uses Owen as Mrs. Gereth, in the beginning, uses Fleda. Thus, unlike Hawthorne, even the innocent maidens in James's world are capable of destructive acts, against others and themselves.

Attempts to find distinct connecting links amongst the remaining characters in both works is even more difficult. Clifford and Owen seem to be united by their frailties, but Clifford's obsession for beauty represents a direct contrast to Owen's aesthetic ignorance. Characters such as Uncle Venner, Holgrave, Mona and Mrs. Brigstock find no trace of parallels in the other works.

Apart from Jaffrey Pyncheon and Mrs. Gereth, the attempt to locate clear similarities between characters is, at best, stretched. Bewley's method of comparing themes and characters, therefore, does not appear applicable to

The House of the Seven Gables and The Spoils of Poynton. This approach of Bewley's, moreover, to any works of James and Hawthorne, should be regarded as somewhat suspect because it tends to fasten James a bit too closely to Hawthorne, threatening to make him appear as a 'translator' of Hawthorne rather than as a creative writer in his own right.

In "The Hawthorne Aspect", T. S. Eliot suggests that James and Hawthorne are tied together by their interest in the "deeper psychology" -- the term is James's and is used in reference to Hawthorne -- which Eliot interprets as "the observation, and the sense for situation". "The point is that Hawthorne was acutely sensitive to the situation; that he did grasp character through the relation of two or more persons to each other; and this is what no one else, except James, has done."[7] Character, therefore, is not something static and unchangeable, rather it is revealed and affected by the presence and actions of other characters. This would certainly seem to be the case in The House of the Seven Gables where we develop a sense of character by comparisons to other characters. Judge Pyncheon's overriding destructiveness is best seen beside the frailty of Clifford and the defenselessness of Phoebe, Hepzibah's mustiness is more fully viewed when she stands beside the freshness of Phoebe, and Holgrave's icy intellectualism is most apparent in relation to Phoebe's domestic warmth. Similarly, in The Spoils of Poynton much is learned of the

personalities of Mrs. Gereth and Fleda Vetch by viewing them in contact with each other, thus giving the reader opportunity for comparisons. Fleda's elaborate methods of viewing the actions of others and her sense of duty and honour become clearly focused when set in relation to Mrs. Gereth's simplistic and almost bullheaded way of viewing her world, and her thinly veiled greed. Furthermore, the extremely complex material of Fleda's mind is best illustrated when placed beside the rather dull actions of the Brigstocks. In both The House of the Seven Gables and The Spoils of Poynton, therefore, it appears that the personalities of characters are revealed by contrasting them to opposing states of mind.

It will be interesting, in this connection, to examine two chapters, one from The Spoils of Poynton and one from The House of the Seven Gables, to see if the works are comparable, not so much in the particular characters or actions displayed, but in the structural patterns and methods, the manner in which the authors 'shape' the characters into the scenes. In The House of the Seven Gables, Chapter Eight plainly shows how character is examined through the relation of one person to another. The chapter deals with the introductory meeting of Phoebe and Jaffrey on the threshold of the house. The Judge's ever shifting appearance and Phoebe's reaction to it fills the greater part of the scene. The chapter ends when Hepzibah enters and frantically

demands the withdrawal of Jaffrey. Despite the fact that very little happens in this chapter, an immense amount of knowledge is gathered by watching the response of each character to the other. Firstly, never do the Satanic powers of Jaffrey look quite so pernicious as when set in relation to Phoebe. Furthermore, Jaffrey's bold stance on the threshold and his strong desire to enter clearly signifies extreme danger for the house and its occupants. Phoebe is fooled by the Judge's false smile and swayed by his words. Hence a severe weakness is revealed. Phoebe, with all her freshness and innocence, is unable to defend herself against evil. It is Hepzibah who repels Jaffrey, and thus though Hawthorne has made us aware of her miserable and isolated existence, she has, it seems, developed the necessary faculty to distinguish good from evil. Our knowledge of all three characters, therefore, is enlarged, simply by exposing them to a "situation."

In Chapter Fifteen of The Spoils of Poynton, the manner in which characters react to one another once again assumes primary importance. The unexpected intrusion of Mrs. Brigstock on the meeting of Owen and Fleda is the occurence upon which the chapter revolves. The results of this situation on every character are carefully catalogued. James relates that Mrs. Brigstock is astonished to find Owen with Fleda but her thought processes are of the simplest kind, and the only way one comprehends how much she perceives

is to study the "shade of pink" on her face. Owen, for the first and only time in the book, attempts to take charge of the situation, desiring nothing more than the protection of Fleda. In contrast to these two points of view, however, is Fleda, whose subtle and sensitive thoughts and reactions provide the centre of consciousness for this and other chapters. Fleda is forever crediting the responses of people to situations with the complexities that, in the case under study, only she is capable of. When Mrs. Brigstock enters upon the scene, Fleda sees far more in a partially digested biscuit than the other two can possibly see.

> Mrs. Brigstock, in the doorway, stood looking from one of the occupants of the room to the other; then they saw her eyes attach themselves to a small object that had lain hitherto unnoticed on the carpet. This was the biscuit of which, on giving Owen his tea, Fleda had taken a perfunctory nibble: she had immediately laid it on the table, and that subsequently, in some precipitate movement, she should have brushed it off was doubtless a sign of the agitation that possessed her. For Mrs. Brigstock there was apparently more in it than met the eye. Owen at any rate picked it up, and Fleda felt as if he were removing the traces of some scene that the newspapers would have characterized as lively. (I2I)*

Although nothing "lively" has transpired within the room, Fleda's manner of viewing her 'role' in the novel produces feelings of guilt and danger. She acts like a 'mouse' caught 'in the act', and thus this scene, like a number of others, indicates the often frantic manner in which Fleda's

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* All references to The Spoils of Poynton are from the Penguin edition of I972. Parenthetic numerals indicate page numbers.

mind works.

What stands uppermost in these two chapters, and what appears to confirm Eliot's comments, is the way both authors create character by contrast and comparison and by situation. Thus the unexpected or unwanted appearance of one character -- Jaffrey in The House of the Seven Gables and Mrs. Brigstock in The Spoils of Poynton -- sets in motion a type of chain reaction, where every character's response illuminates important aspects of their personalities. Both chapters, it will be observed, are dominated by the physical separation between the character on the 'outside', standing on the threshold, and the persons inside, who, for one reason or another, feel threatened by the stare of their unwanted guest. Thus the tension in these chapters is emphasized by the positions of the characters. At times, moreover, the relation and awareness of characters is brilliantly dramatized in a single image, and the action often becomes momentarily frozen in a pose such as the Judge's smile, his stand on the threshold, Fleda, in her static, mouselike stand with her nibbled biscuit, and Mrs. Brigstock silently peering at Owen and Fleda. In all these actions, or more specifically, non-actions, the effect is encapsulated within a silent and motionless pose. It is as if the physical positions of the characters, their static, almost sculptured poses and the manner in which they constantly observe each other forces us to regard them 'visually',

to form mental pictures of these scenes.

In relation to this aspect of James's art, J. W. Beach, in The Method of Henry James, reaches related conclusions. Beach relates that unlike novelists such as George Eliot or Meredith, James conceives his subject not as a "thesis" or a "moral" but as a "picture." "A dramatic situation, a human relationship" forms the centre of the story, and thus for James it is the "method of composition" and not 'ideas' that stands paramount.[8] One may, in general, examine The Spoils of Poynton from this viewpoint. The human relationship upon which the novel rests is the interactions between Fleda and Mrs. Gereth and the dramatic situation is furnished by the house and the 'battle' for its contents. The story springs not from any abstract notion or idea, but from what James terms as the "germ", that is the initial, concentrated suggestion of a situation.

Beach, therefore, sees James's method as being comparable to a painter's, where composition and relation ships are of the greatest importance. Whether or not similar terminology may be employed to analyse The House of the Seven Gables needs to be discussed. The 'dramatic situation' appears to be the confiscation of Maule's land, his tragic execution and conjointly, the mysterious death of Colonel Pyncheon. Of course, the importance of these actions is in their effect upon the future generations of Pyncheons and their house. The 'human relationship' is

not centred in a primary pair of characters but scrutinizes various interactions among Clifford, Hepzibah, Jaffrey, Phoebe and Holgrave. Thus if The House of the Seven Gables is to be regarded as a composition or painting, it seems to lack the sharp focus of The Spoils of Poynton. Yet, as was seen earlier, the methods of Hawthorne and James are remarkably similar in the way character is conveyed in a static pose or picture. Two words that appear frequently in Hawthorne's discussions of fiction, particularly in his prefaces, are "atmosphere" and "picturesque." The stress that Hawthorne puts on these words leaves no doubt that like James, Hawthorne considered ideas subordinate to the overall composition. In The House of the Seven Gables, in fact, Hawthorne seems to be deliberately creating a link between his fiction and the visual arts. Holgrave is a daguerrotypist, and the pictoral representations of Colonel Pyncheon, Jaffrey and Clifford emerge often enough for us to recognise their importance. In all cases, aspects of the characters' personalities are revealed only by studying their portraits and hence Hawthorne appears to be making a statement about the power of painting and the effectiveness of artistic imagination. Finally, it is seen that Hawthorne, in describing the gabled house, employs the eye of the artist -- concentrating on all minute particulars and examining the relationship between the house and its environment, the way light and darkness, the Pyncheon elm

and Alice's posies affect the manner in which we view the house.

Notes to Chapter One

1 F. O. Matthiessen, American Renaissance, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 294.

2 Bewley speculates that James was intrigued by the works of Hawthorne because both authors were working within a tradition of recognizable American moral concerns. "He [Hawthorne] kept before the later novelist the constant reminder that an American artist must be peculiarly concerned, at a serious moral level, with certain national and social problems, and this shared concern unfolded, in the writings of both men, into still deeper problems and resemblances that became, in their turn, the very texture and meaning of their art. It was Hawthorne, then, who helped make James into an American novelist, and who prevented him from becoming a 'slightly disenchanted and casually disqualified' cosmopolite." In the above quotation, Bewley builds his argument around the assumption that a vital and cohesive American aesthetic tradition exists in the writings of Hawthorne and James, yet he fails to specify the nature of this tradition and where its moral concerns might be found. Furthermore, if we see James's 'purpose' in art as "closing the split in American experience", as Bewley does, then a great difficulty arises in placing some of James's works which have no relation to anything specifically American or to the 'international theme', such as What Maisie Knew, The Tragic Muse and even The Spoils of Poynton.
The Complex Fate, (New York: Gordian Press, 1967), [copyright 1952], p. 77.

3 Bewley, The Complex Fate, p. 25.

4 F. O. Matthiessen, "The House of the Seven Gables", in A. N. Kaul, ed., Hawthorne: A Collection of Critical Essays, (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1966), p. 152.

5 James's "The Art of Fiction" is a good critical essay of his views and it clearly indicates his differences in temperment from Hawthorne. The following words, for example, strike an opposing chord to Hawthorne's romantic prefaces. "The only reason for the existence of a novel is that it does attempt to represent life."
"The Art of Fiction," in Lyon N. Richardson, ed., Henry James, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1966), p. 77.

6 Bewley, The Complex Fate, p. 27.

7 T. S. Eliot, "The Hawthorne Aspect," in J. Don Vann, ed., Critics on Henry James, (London: Allen & Unwin, 1974), p. 35.

8 J. W. Beach, The Method of Henry James, (Philadelphia: Saifer, 1954), 26.

CHAPTER TWO

A clearer understanding of James's and Hawthorne's methods of composition in The Spoils of Poynton and The House of the Seven Gables will emerge by examining a number of their critical writings. Yet the comments and criticisms of the authors will illustrate, perhaps more than their fiction does, their differences of outlook, for in their own commentaries Hawthorne views himself as a romantic and James as a novelist. In his preface to The House of the Seven Gables, Hawthorne writes,

> When a writer calls his work a Romance, it need hardly be observed that he wishes to claim a certain latitude, both as to its fashion and material, which he would not have felt himself entitled to assume had he professed to be writing a Novel. The latter form of composition is presumed to aim at a very minute fidelity, not merely to the possible, but to the probable and ordinary course of man's experience. The former -- while, as a work of art, it must rigidly subject itself to laws, and while it sins unpardonably so far as it may swerve aside from the truth of the human heart -- has fairly a right to present that truth under circumstances, to a great extent, of the writer's own choosing or creation. If he think fit, also, he may so manage his atmospherical medium as to bring out or mellow the lights and deepen and enrich the shadows of the picture. (VII)

In his preface, Hawthorne seeks approval, or at least tolerance, from the reader for the many 'non-realistic' aspects within The House of the Seven Gables. Everything in this work, including the representation of characters, exists to strengthen the "atmospherical medium," the "picture". The

characters are not strongly developed or well rounded. They function as allegorical figures whose emblematic states of mind intensify the general effect or the major theme, and their importance, according to Hawthorne's statement, should be looked for on this level. Thus we should view the mellow light that surrounds Phoebe as the crucial indicator of her 'social' warmth, and the glaring light that accompanies Jaffrey Pyncheon as the emblem of his destructive powers.[1]

Unlike Hawthorne, James did not consider that the artist deserved to "claim a certain latitude", if this latitude violated a 'direct' representation of life. Perhaps James's best criticism of the romantic form, and of Hawthorne, who he always seemed to view as the representative romantic, is found in his critical biography, Hawthorne. In Hawthorne (1879), James looked upon The House of the Seven Gables as a "prologue" and a "magnificent fragment" rather than as a 'complete' novel: "I think this is partly owing to the fact that the subject, the donnée, as the French say, of the story, does not quite fill it out, and that we get at the same time an impression of certain complicated purposes on the author's part, which seem to reach beyond it."[2]

James's severest criticism, however, was reserved for Hawthorne's non-realistic methods of shaping character and for creating allegories. Despite the often brilliant touches found in the representations of Hepzibah, Clifford, Phoebe and Jaffrey, James described them as

"figures rather than characters -- they are all pictures rather than persons."[3] In all of Hawthorne's fiction, James was distressed by the abundance of allegory, and in The House of the Seven Gables where associations such as the Garden of Eden imagery and comparisons between the actions of Phoebe and those of Eve are always forcing us to consider the story of the original sin in connection with the Pyncheons, James's complaint deserves attention.

> Hawthorne, in his metaphysical moods, is nothing if not allegorical, and allegory, to my sense, is quite one of the lighter exercises of the imagination. Many excellent judges, I know, have a great stomach for it; they delight in symbols and correspondences, in seeing a story told as if it were another and a very different story. I frankly confess that I have, as a general thing, but little enjoyment of it, and that it has never seemed to me to be, as it were, a first-rate literary form. [4]

James saw these 'weaknesses' in Hawthorne's fiction to be not so much due to personal flaws but to the social environment in which it was created. Thus Hawthorne's milieu, pre-civil war America, was responsible for his "conservatism" and his inability to perceive anything except from the position of "an outsider, of a stranger." This latter weakness, and his failure to gain 'worldly experience', is, according to James, most clearly evident in Hawthorne's last works when he had travelled extensively in England and Italy. Hawthorne's writing, like everything else American, is termed as "provincial", and it is this provincialism that accounts for Hawthorne's "curious" "mistrust of old houses, old institutions, long lines of

descent", a mistrust which for James marred much of The House of the Seven Gables.[5]

What has emerged thus far, in Hawthorne's preface to The House of the Seven Gables and James's criticism of this work in Hawthorne, is an apparently insurmountable gulf between Hawthorne the 'romanticist' and James the 'novelist'. Judging solely from the above quotations one would be very hard put to discover any common ground between The Spoils of Poynton and The House of the Seven Gables. Hawthorne's devices, which are aimed at creating an "atmospherical medium", and James's methods and statements, such as, "the air of reality (solidity of specification) seems to me to be the supreme virtue of a novel ...", are irreconcilable and antagonistic.[6] As illustrated earlier, this is most evident in the manner in which Hawthorne and James create characters. From the standpoint of 'composition', however, one should note the affiliation between the words "atmospherical" and "air".

Although these radical differences between the methods of James and the romances of Hawthorne must never be dismissed, one should keep in mind that Hawthorne was published in 1879, the year in which "Daisy Miller" appeared and two years before the publishing of The Portrait of a Lady. These are the early years of what has been termed as James's middle period, and it will be recalled that Matthiessen, among others, speculates that Hawthorne's influence upon

James is at its weakest during this period. It certainly seems, from some of the statements in Hawthorne, that James, at this time, is firmly in the 'camp' of writers such as Flaubert, Turgenev and the Goncourts.

In his article, "Henry James on Hawthorne", Peter Buitenhuis indicates that it is a mistake to regard the critical biography as James's definitive statement on Hawthorne. Throughout his career, James made a number of evaluations on the writings of Hawthorne. Not too surprisingly, each evaluation is, to some degree, distinctive from the others for they are all dependant upon and shaped by James's own development as a creative artist. Buitenhuis's article appears to indicate that the more James aged, the more willing he was to heap praise upon Hawthorne's fiction, and by chronologically compiling James's words on Hawthorne, it is seen that by the 1890's James had almost completely revamped his 1879 opinions. For instance, Hawthorne's "provincialism", his lack of worldly experience, is no longer looked upon as one of his greatest flaws but as one of his, or any author's, greatest strengths.

In 1897, the year after The Spoils of Poynton was published, James composed an introduction to some selections of Hawthorne. While all of Hawthorne's works were highly admired, it was for The House of the Seven Gables that James reserved his special praise. It is "the closest approach we are likely to have to the great work of fiction,

so often called for, that is to do us nationally most honor and most good.... its charm (is) irresistible, its distinction complete."[7] This is certainly a far cry from James's criticisms expressed in Hawthorne and with words such as these it seems difficult not to assume that The House of the Seven Gables must have been, in one form or another, at the back of James's mind in or around the creation of The Spoils of Poynton. For after raising Hawthorne's book to such an exalted position, it is probable that James could not write 'about' a house without being influenced by the earlier, gabled house. At any rate, James's former criticisms of Hawthorne must be, to some extent, disregarded in lieu of his later comments.

Buitenhuis speculates that the reason for James's re-assessment of Hawthorne is his altered point of view towards isolation and its effect on the artist, and hence Hawthorne's greatest advantage, according to James, was that he was an "aesthetic solitary". Buitenhuis states,

> Hawthorne therefore ceased to be, in James's eyes, an underprivileged novelist and became a writer with a consistent and effective point of view. This led him to a vastly increased sense of Hawthorne's power. 'It was a faculty,' he concluded, that gave him much more a terrible sense of human abysses than a desire rashly to sound them and rise to the surface with his report.... He never intermeddled; he was divertedly and discreetly contemplative, pausing oftenest wherever, amid prosaic aspects, there seemed most of an appeal to a sense for subtleties.'
>
> This statement could easily be taken for a description of James's own fictional methods at the time of writing this introduction. For he was then engaged in those subtle analyses of some of the most

> apparently prosaic and sordid aspects of English society: i.e., The Spoils of Poynton, What Maisie Knew, and "In the Cage." [8]

Thus in Buitenhuis's opinion, James, at this point in his career, is joined to Hawthorne by his desire to investigate the "terrible sense of human abysses".[9] Whether or not one endorses Buitenhuis's comments, it is certainly easy to apply them to The House of the Seven Gables and The Spoils of Poynton since the threatening atmosphere which surrounds both principle houses and characterizations, such as Colonel Pyncheon, Jaffrey and Mrs. Gereth, appears to show absorbing interests in the "sordid aspects" of human nature.[10]

The preface to The Spoils of Poynton indicates that James's pleas for a direct representation of life in art, which he voiced so strenuously in Hawthorne and "The Art of Fiction", have given way to thoughts concerning the "germ". James defines the germ as "the stray suggestion, the wandering word, the vague echo, at touch of which the novelist's imagination winces as at the prick of some sharp point: its virtue is all in its needle-like quality, the power to penetrate as finely as possible"[11] (the germ of The Spoils of Poynton was the situation of a mother and son contesting the right of ownership of their family house and valuable furniture). It is, continues James, from this "kernel" that art must grow, and not from the attempt to "record" life -- "life being all inclusion and confusion, and art being all discrimination and selection."[12] Thus James turned away, in part, from what he considered to be the

overly rigid confines of naturalistic realism. Adverse statements are found about it not only in the later criticisms but also in his later fiction. For example, an extremely severe complaint of realistic devices in art is "The Real Thing", published in 1893. Obviously, James's presentation of the germ should not be confused with the romanticism of Hawthorne -- he always preferred the novel to the romance -- but alongside James's condemnation of superfluous realistic methods is a flattering re-evaluation of romanticism. In his preface to The American, James wrote,

> The romantic stands....for the things that, with all the facilities in the world, all the wealth and all the courage and all the wit and all the adventure, we can never directly know; the things that can reach us only through the beautiful circuit and subterfuge of our thought and our desire. 13

It is important to recognise that in James's later years, a remarkable transformation has taken place in his theories about and methods of creating fiction. Matthiessen, it will be recalled, found in James's later fiction a growing emphasis on complex patterns of symbolism, which he allied to Hawthorne's methods of creating images and symbols. Leon Edel comments on this 'shift' in regard to James's later tales, but, as will be seen, his words apply to The Spoils of Poynton and the treatment of its heroine as well.

> The tales of the late period might, at first glance, have been written by someone else, so great a change has occurred. The story-teller's mood is profoundly altered -- but not his temperament. With middle age his tales cease to be minutely descriptive.

> The discussion of manners and the behavior of American girls gradually disappears: the preoccupation with problems of conduct gives way to a study of states of feeling and of dilemmas of existence. He begins to probe the 'unlived' life of his characters.... who discover too late the price they have paid for their sensitivity and their insulation against the shock of experience. I4

There is an abundance of characters in the fiction of Hawthorne and in the late fiction of James who attempt to cloak themselves from the "shock of experience" and who are either ruined or greatly changed when this 'cloak' falls. In the case of James's writings, however, it would be erroneous to imply that only the later heroes suffer from this shock of experience, for in her relation with Osmond, Isabel Archer suffers when her illusions dissolve. But for the later heroes and heroines it is a jolt, more pronounced and violent than in previous cases. Marcher in "The Beast in the Jungle", Spencer Brydon in "The Jolly Corner" and Lambert Strether in The Ambassadors share this "shock" with Reuben Bourne in "Roger Malvin's Burial" and Goodman Brown in "Young Goodman Brown". In each case, James and Hawthorne are exploring how unconscious motivations and fantasies control one's sensibilities and shut off one's way of perceiving the dangers of being led by such faculties. As a result, most of the above heroes become dangerously alienated from mankind. The two works under discussion contain a number of characters who attempt to 'insulate' themselves against the outside world and outside influences and experiences, and who, in their morbid and suffocating

communion with only themselves, are shaped in a manner which makes them comparable to some of the characters mentioned above. It will be seen that in The House of the Seven Gables, both Hepzibah and Clifford are twisted by their exile from mankind. Similarly, in The Spoils of Poynton, the greed of Mrs. Gereth and the unconscious desires of Fleda Vetch become their dominant and destructive characteristics only because they have set themselves, in their worship of 'beauty', apart from the rest of humanity.

A general concern for both Hawthorne and James, and a concern that is very apparent in The House of the Seven Gables and The Spoils of Poynton, is to study men and women who are isolated from mankind and who are shaped by the often hostile forces that lie beyond contact and communion with one's fellow man. Referring to Buitenhuis's article, this concern might help to explain the authors' concentration on the "sordid aspects" of life. Once again, however, it must be stressed that James is not as interested in Hawthorne's characters as he is by his "situations" -- to use Eliot's term -- and by the way Hawthorne makes characters respond to situations. The study of living in isolation provides the general situation for much of the fiction of Hawthorne and James. In both The House of the Seven Gables and The Spoils of Poynton, the house and the objects within it become the primary symbols of alienation and the devices which make it possible to examine the unconscious motivations and

unseen effects of living in isolation. In his preface to The Spoils of Poynton, James states,

> Yes, it is a story of cabinets and chairs and tables; they formed the bone of contention, but what would merely 'become' of them, magnificently passive, seemed to represent a comparatively vulgar issue. The passions, the faculties, the forces their beauty would, like that of antique Helen of Troy, set in motion, was what, as a painter, one had really wanted of them, was the power in them that one had from the first appreciated. I5

Obviously, in The House of the Seven Gables, these "forces" are "set in motion" as well (moreover, we are reminded again of the commentaries of Eliot and Beach. James is attracted to a situation "as a painter." He, like Hawthorne, is deeply interested in the forms and relationships that emerge as a result of a particular action).

Notes to Chapter Two

I The most lucid definitions of the novel and the romance are in Richard Chase's The American Novel and its Tradition. Like James, Chase finds that one of the greatest differences between the novel and the romance is in methods of characterization. "Character (in the novel) is more important than action and plot, and probably the tragic or comic actions of the narrative will have the primary purpose of enhancing our knowledge of and feeling for an important character, a group of characters, or a way of life." By contrast, in the romance, "Human beings will on the whole be shown in ideal relation -- that is, they will share emotions only after these have become abstract or symbolic. To be sure, characters may become profoundly involved in some way, as in Hawthorne or Melville, but it will be a deep and narrow, an obsessive involvement. ...Being less committed to the immediate rendition of reality than the novel, the romance will more freely veer toward mythic, allegorical, and symbolistic forms." Chase's terminology clearly illustrates a major rift between The House of the Seven Gables and The Spoils of Poynton. The House of the Seven Gables, with its "abstract" characters and "allegorical" devices, is a romantic work. Conversely, almost every action in The Spoils of Poynton emphasizes the character of Fleda Vetch and hence from this important standpoint, the work fits Chase's definition of the novel.
The American Novel and its Tradition, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, I957), pp. I2-I3.

2 Henry James, Hawthorne, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, I966), [copyright I879], p. 97.

3 James, Hawthorne, p. 99.

4 James, Hawthorne, pp. 49-50.

5 James, Hawthorne, p. I03.

6 Henry James, "The Art of Fiction", in Lyon N. Richardson, ed., Henry James, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, I966), p. 85.

7 Peter Buitenhuis, "Henry James on Hawthorne", The New England Quarterly, 32 (I959), p. 2I7.

8 Buitenhuis, "Henry James on Hawthorne", p. 2I9.

9 In reference to James's fiction, J. W. Beach makes a similar statement. "Mr. James makes no secret of his fondness for the 'sinister' and the 'portentous' as colors in

his picture;... "
The Method of Henry James, (Philadelphia: Albert Saifer, I954), p.35.

I0 James's interest in the sordidness of life is surely illustrated in "In the Cage", which was published two years after The Spoils of Poynton. Here, James examines the responses of a telegraphist to people on the other side of the wicket, and the resemblances between this heroine and Fleda Vetch in The Spoils of Poynton are so close that "In the Cage" deserves brief mention. Paramount to the atmosphere of "In the Cage" is the way the 'walled' environment shapes the telegraphist's patterns of thought, and before long it becomes evident that she is dangerously addicted to the type of imaginary security that the cage offers her. "She did last things or pretended to do them; to be in the cage had suddenly become her safety, and she was literally afraid of the alternate self who might be waiting outside." (76) (All references to "In the Cage" are from In the Cage and Other Stories, (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, I972), [copyright I898]. Parenthetic numerals indicate page numbers.) Obviously, Fleda's relationship to Poynton and its furniture is comparable. She 'wraps' herself around Poynton and her often fantastic imaginings are formed by her vision of the house.

Not surprisingly, the actions and fantasies of both heroines are portrayed in similar terms. Like Fleda, the young and inexperienced telegraphist looks upon her activities and her imagined function within them as a "fascinating torment" (I3), she decides to "sacrifice" all "for love" (43) and she is attracted to the gentleman who appears often on the other side of the wicket, as Fleda is attracted to Owen, because he appears "splendidly helpless" (83). Furthermore, the telegraphist's friendship with Mrs. Jordan is comparable to the relationship between Mrs. Gereth and Fleda. Both Mrs. Gereth and Mrs. Jordan are older more experienced women who threaten to corrupt their young, innocent companions.

In the preface to "In the Cage" our attention is drawn to another parallel. James discusses the dangers of the "acuter vision", the "large intellectual appetite", which is precisely the danger surrounding the fantasies and conjectures of Fleda Vetch. In reference to the telegraphist, James condemns "the vice of reading rank subtleties into simple souls." In The Spoils of Poynton, Fleda is 'guilty' of the same crime, attributing thoughts and actions to Owen and the Brigstocks that are simply beyond their reach.
The Art of the Novel, (New York: Scribner's, I934), p. I55.

II Henry James, The Art of the Novel, (New York: Scribner's, I934), p. II9.

I2 James, The Art of the Novel, p. I20.

I3 James, The Art of the Novel, pp. 3I-32.

I4 Leon Edel, "The Tales", in Leon Edel, ed., Henry James: A Collection of Critical Essays, (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, I963), p. I77.

I5 James, The Art of the Novel, p. I27.

CHAPTER THREE

Thus, it has been seen how Hawthorne's romantic methods and James's preference for the novel form account for a number of differences in the way the authors shape plot and character. Furthermore, as the following pages will indicate, the function of the house differs in both works. Page after page of The House of the Seven Gables is concerned with observing the house and recording how it reflects and reacts to certain actions. Conversely, descriptive passages concerning any house in The Spoils of Poynton are rare. Unlike Hawthorne, James disregards allegory for the study of character. The Spoils of Poynton is not 'about' a house but about a girl affected by a house.

Apart from this discrepancy, however, the way James and Hawthorne employ the house provides the greatest connecting link between The Spoils of Poynton and The House of the Seven Gables. Both authors consistently use the house as an illumination and extension of their owners' personalities. We learn of crucial characteristics of Jaffrey, Hepzibah, Mrs. Brigstock and Mrs. Gereth through their homes. James and Hawthorne, moreover, employ the house as the shaping and controlling force of character. Hepzibah, in her isolation, is moulded by the age-ridden and gloomy corridors of her house, and Poynton and its furniture pervert and blind the actions of Fleda and Mrs. Gereth.

Along the same lines, it will be seen that in both works the house emerges as a symbol of pride.

In The Spoils of Poynton and The House of the Seven Gables, the house sets in motion a rich "situation" in which relationships between characters and their environment or between one character and another are carefully examined. Very complex mazes of interconnected symbols and images revolve, in one form or another, around the houses. For these reasons, the house must be regarded as the 'centre' for both works. Thus what would in many novels or romances be merely the 'setting' is in these works of the utmost importance. Hawthorne and James view their fiction as 'compositions' where every aspect must be related to the entire picture. It will be recalled from page three that, in A Portrait of a Lady, Madame Merle stated that only by studying the "cluster of appurtenances" would the human character be revealed. It is from this point of view that Hawthorne and James create their art. Similarities in theme and character do exist between The House of the Seven Gables and The Spoils of Poynton but by far the greatest bond is in the methods of composition, the way both authors create by situation and relation through the focussing device of the house.

In the first paragraph of The House of the Seven Gables, Hawthorne is careful to draw our attention to the primary subject for his romance.

> Half-way down a by-street of one of our New England towns, stands a rusty wooden house, with seven acutely-peaked gables, facing towards various points of the compass, and a huge, clustered chimney in the midst. The street is Pyncheon-street; the house is the old Pyncheon-house; and an elm-tree, of wide circumference, rooted before the door, is familiar to every town born child by the title of the Pyncheon-elm (I25).

The house, as the narrator is quick to point out in the second paragraph, affects him as a "human countenance". Related images are found throughout the book. At times, breezes travelling along the corridors make the house appear as if it is "breathing", and the many generations who have lived and died in the house seem to have given it the appearance of life. "So much had been suffered, and something, too, enjoyed, -- that the timbers were oozy, as with the moisture of a heart. It was itself like a great human heart, with a life of its own, and full of rich and sombre reminiscences " (I38). It is almost as if Hawthorne wishes us to regard the house as the major 'character'. Early in the book, therefore, the affinity between setting and character is stressed. The rendering of its 'life story', from its first days down through the generations, until Hepzibah and the others abandon it, helps to create the sensation that the house has a distinct and important existence.

The appearance of the house is carefully catalogued. In the opening chapters, two characteristics of the house stand out, its size and its age. The former factor is most apparent when the house is newly built. When the construction

of the house is completed, the townspeople, "as they approached, looked upward at the imposing edifice, which was henceforth to assume its rank among the habitations of mankind " (I28). In height and shape, the mansion is comparable to a highly ornate house of worship, a gothic cathedral. The arched doorway is "almost the breadth of a church-door", the exterior plaster, "composed of lime, pebbles, and bits of glass", and the diamond shaped window panes glitter in a way that is perhaps similar to stained glass in churches, and finally, "on every side, the seven gables pointed sharply towards the sky, and presented the aspect of a whole sister-hood of edifices, breathing through the spiracles of one great chimney " (I29). Iron rods are affixed to each of the "acutely peaked" gables, adding the finishing touches to the massive and extremely angular demeanor of the house.

The cathedral-like aspects of the house give it a slightly twisted and sinister appearance. This is amplified by the description of the exterior of the mansion, which seems to be over-adorned, as "figures, conceived in the grotesqueness of a gothic fancy" and "carved globes of wood" are abundantly fastened to the walls and eaves(I28-I29). The inordinately opulent veneer of the house reflects upon its owner, the Puritan magnate, Colonel Pyncheon, who acquired the land upon which the house rests by murdering the rightful owner of the property. Hence the 'glittering' house, Hawthorne informs us, is built not upon modesty, but upon

evil and egotistical pride (I28).

The second major characteristic, the house's age, is in full evidence in the second chapter, where one hundred and sixty years have passed since the death of Colonel Pyncheon. Colonel Pyncheon's prideful attempt to construct an almost indestructible home for the well-being of his future offspring seems to have been mocked by time. The former glitter and magnificence of the house have given way to "crumbling plaster" (I38) and an overall darkness and dreariness. The present mistress of the house, Hepzibah, seems, by means of her age and musty appearance, to be an appropriate owner of the dismal chambers of the house. Thus, like the description of Colonel Pyncheon, we see some of Hepzibah's characteristics reflected in the house.

Throughout the greater part of the second chapter, Hawthorne's portrayal of Hepzibah's activities is exceedingly satirical.

> It still lacked half an hour of sunrise, when Miss Hepzibah Pyncheon -- we will not say awoke; .... but, at all events, arose from her solitary pillow, and began what it would be mockery to term the adornment of her person. Far from us be the indecorum of assisting, even in imagination, at a maiden lady's toilet! (I39-I40)

At times, moreover, Hawthorne's satirical treatment of the old maid seems almost unkind. "No; she never had a lover -- poor thing, how could she? -- nor ever knew, by her own experience, what love technically means" (I4I). Perhaps the reason for such commentary is that Hepzibah, like her

ancestor, presents to the world "an image of family pride". As a "patrician lady", "with her antique portraits, pedigrees, coats of arms, records and traditions, and her claim, as joint heiress, to that princely territory to the eastward" (I45), she scornfully considers herself superior to the plebeian members of society. Such an attitude was first expressed by the Colonel, who robbed the non-titled Matthew Maule of his property and eventually employed his judicial position to murder him. Clearly, the rot and decay that has infested the house is indicative of the fact that it was built by the sinful greed of the Pyncheons, and symbolizes the destructive pride that has continued down the ancestral line to Hepzibah.

Like the inbred hens in the garden, Hepzibah is a laughingly absurd example of family pride and tradition. Hence when the "rusty-jointed", aristocratic spinster prepares for the humiliation of standing behind the counter of a cent shop, it is with satire that Hawthorne reduces the ancestral line of the Pyncheons. The "family pride" of the Pyncheons terminates with this pathetic but humourous act for it will draw Hepzibah and her remaining kindred into contact with humanity, and consequently, will lift the veil of aristocratic aloofness from the house of the seven gables.

From the beginning of his romance, Hawthorne explores various problems surrounding the concepts of 'home', that is how one lives within "the greater stream of humanity." The

concept of 'home' is central to many of Hawthorne's writings. In "The Custom House", Hawthorne nostalgically recalls his life at the Old Manse and in his preface to The Blithedale Romance, he dwells on his "old and affectionately remembered home at Brook Farm". Against these fond references to home-life, however, there are many instances in Hawthorne's fiction where living within the confines of a house is viewed as extremely difficult. Coverdale, the narrator in The Blithedale Romance, lends support to the communal household but finds it impossible to wholeheartedly join its ranks. Almost opposed to his wishes, there is something in his nature which prohibits him from close contact with his fellow man. He remains an outsider, voyeuristically peering down upon the activities of his companions from his perch in a tree, or from the window of his temporary quarters in the city. Similarly, a number of Hawthornian heroes leave, or are unconsciously forced away from, the safety and comfort of home and family, only to find catastrophe in the wilderness. Young Goodman Brown, in the tale by that name, and Reuben Bourne, in "Roger Malvin's Burial", are examples.

In the above tales, home seems to represent protection and communion with one's fellow man. 'Curiosity' is portrayed as one of the forces that drives Hawthorne's characters away from home. Because of his fascination for witchcraft, Young Goodman Brown deserts the hearth of his

wife, Faith, Ethan Brand's endless search for the Unpardonable Sin has severed his bond with humanity, and Owen Warland, the artist figure in "The Artist of the Beautiful", is forced to reject the comforts of wife and home for his isolated artistic endeavors. Once the Hawthornian hero, artist or otherwise, begins to grow curious about his world, it seems that he must sacrifice home and humanity to a solitary and often miserable existence. In this light, the Unpardonable Sin is simply the desire to discover the Unpardonable Sin. It is almost as if Hawthorne regards knowledge as a sin, and a dilemma in Hawthorne's ambiguous concept of home is that those characters who desert their fellow man, through their desire to discover 'truth' about themselves or their world, are often much more interesting and deserving of our sympathy than those sometimes thoughtless persons who represent society. As an artist, this was a personal problem for Hawthorne. He recognised the need for the artist, or for any creative person, to be alone and apart from mankind, but at the same time he feared the self-destructive effects of isolation and obsession with one's solitary efforts. I

Hawthorne's major criticism of the house of the seven gables, as seen in the portrayal of Hepzibah in Chapter Two, is that it offers no homely warmth or friendliness. Until the opening of the cent shop, it is obvious that its doors have been shut to any sort of commerce with society for many years and thus, in a sense, both Hepzibah and her house are affected by the same ruinous sin of

isolation that is associated with the characters above. Hence pride, like curiosity, creates a dangerous rift between the individual and mankind. Far from creating a link for its occupants with society, the seven gabled house has produced only separation. Hawthorne's description of the features of the cathedral-like mansion indicates that, from its beginning, the house is physically designed to divide its owners from the townspeople. On the day, one hundred and sixty years ago, when the tradesmen and aristocrats alike viewed the house, we are informed that beyond the arched entrance "stood two servingmen, pointing some of the guests to the neighborhood of the kitchen, and ushering others into the statlier rooms, ..." (I29). The house has such an imposing appearance as to make the less fortunate members of society "awe-stricken" and respectful of their social superiors.

As we have seen, Colonel Pyncheon's aristocratic manners and opinions have, through the aged atmosphere of the house, filtered down to Hepzibah. Yet where her attitudes and pretensions are a source for humour and satire, the Colonel's belligerence and determination, combined with his very influential position within society, inform us that he must be viewed from a different position. Where Hepzibah withdraws from mankind, Colonel Pyncheon becomes one of its masters. Wielding the almost blind power that comes from being a leader of society, Colonel

Pyncheon builds his house on the ground that recently supported Maule's thatched hut, and the massiveness of the mansion epitomizes the ruthless power of the Colonel as perhaps the fragile hut illustrates Maule's defencelessness.

Edgar A. Dryden, in his article "Hawthorne's Castle in the Air: Form and Theme in The House of the Seven Gables", speculates that Maule's hut, divorced from mankind, exemplifies "the solitary pioneer". Colonel Pyncheon, on the other hand, represents society, and the destructive manner in which society threatens those who attempt to stand away from it. "Society itself is what truly threatens the pioneering spirit, for it destroys individualism by turning it into the demonic. Matthew Maule was accused of and executed for witchcraft and that circumstance became the justification for society's appropriating and re-consecrating the space he had carved from the wilderness."[2] What might be somewhat erroneous in this statement is the representation of Colonel Pyncheon as 'society'. Like Endicott, in "Endicott and the Red Cross", Colonel Pyncheon is looked upon as a leader, the man who upholds the unswerving morality of Puritanism. In his own way the Colonel is as withdrawn from society as is Hepzibah. He is a manipulator of society, separated from it by the almost impenetrable walls of his stately mansion.

If Colonel Pyncheon represents any aspect of 'society', it is the idealistic blindness of Puritanism,

the obsessive intolerance for any way of life that does not fit into his very narrow social code. Such blindness is attributed to Endicott as well, and although his primary characteristic is his courageousness, we are made aware that such an individual could unthinkingly lead his community to ruin. It is this cramped idealism that is responsible for the perverted abuses of this "Puritan soldier and magistrate" (I27). It has made him purely evil, bent on obliterating anything that stands in his way. So twisted is his outlook, that he is unaware of the crimes he has committed.

> Endowed with common sense, as massive and hard as blocks of granite, fastened together by stern rigidity of purpose, as with iron clamps, he followed out his original design, probably without so much as imagining an objection to it. .... He, therefore, dug his cellar, and laid the deep foundations of his mansion, on the square of earth whence Matthew Maule, forty years before, had first swept away the fallen leaves (I27).

Colonel Pyncheon's crime seems to permanently stain the atmosphere of the house and the actions of its future residents. All, however, is not decay and darkness. Two events transform the house into a home of some comfort, and eventually lead to the expulsion of the stain. Firstly, as has been seen, Hepzibah's opening of the cent shop puts an end to her aristocratic pride. She must work in order to support her childlike brother, who has recently returned from prison. Her pride, therefore, falls to her compassion, and her solitary ways are terminated by her love for Clifford. Thus when the first customer, a young boy with a voracious

appetite, gives Hepzibah the first coin, a new era is ushered in.

> The structure of the ancient aristocracy had been demolished by him, even as if his childish grip 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 (I52)!

The second event is the arrival of Phoebe. From the beginning, Phoebe, as her name implies, brings sunlight to the dismal old house. Her presence, like that of Colonel Pyncheon and Hepzibah, seems to affect the appearance of the house. In her chamber, a room that Hawthorne points out is burdened by a number of past births and deaths, Phoebe's instinctive gaiety easily drives away the ghosts during her first night in the house. "Her dreams of the past night, being such cheerful ones, had exorcised the gloom, and now haunted the chamber in its stead" (I65). At times, moreover, Phoebe's beneficial presence seems to transform the atmosphere of the entire mansion.

> The grime and sordidness of the House of the Seven Gables seemed to have vanished, since her appearance there; the gnawing tooth of the dry-rot was stayed, among the old timbers of its skeleton frame; the dust had ceased to settle down so densely, from the antique ceilings, upon the floors and furniture of the rooms below; -- or, at any rate, there was a little wife, as light-footed as the breeze that sweeps a garden walk, gliding hither and thither, to brush it all away (20I).

When Phoebe's first day at the house is compared to Fleda Vetch's introduction to Poynton both differences and similarities are revealed. Hawthorne, directly focussing

on the house, describes Phoebe's effect on it. James, always keeping character uppermost, describes Poynton's effect on Fleda. In the former work, therefore, character is related to the house, while in The Spoils of Poynton, James has reversed this process, relating the mansion to the character. In both books, however, the authors are quick to construct a strong bond between their houses and heroines. Neither character nor house may be suitably examined without taking into account this relationship. Furthermore, what strikes Fleda most in Mrs. Gereth's decoration of Poynton is "the high pride of her friend's taste, a fine arrogance, ... (I9).

Phoebe, therefore, is a "purifying influence" for both the house and its dismal occupants. Her specific role is most clearly defined when Clifford, who often seems as vague and apart as the supposed ghosts who wander the house's corridors, grasps Phoebe's hand, and we notice in the contrast between these two persons, Phoebe's most important function. "Holding her hand, you felt something; a tender something; a substance, and a warm one: and so long as you should feel its grasp, soft as it was, you might be certain that your place was good in the whole sympathetic chain of human nature. The world was no longer a delusion" (204). Phoebe signifies companionship and communion and it is these qualities which form a direct contrast to the hermetic existences of Hepzibah and Clifford.

What is clearly lacking in Hepzibah's nature, and, until the arrival of Phoebe, reflected in her isolated habitation, is this "sympathetic chain of human nature".[3] Thus the concept of 'home', as seen in the opposition between isolation and communion, is re-asserted as a major concern in The House of the Seven Gables.

Such a nature, however, is not totally advantageous, and by bringing Phoebe into contact with the other major characters, Hawthorne illustrates her 'blind spots'. In conversation with Hepzibah at one point and Holgrave at another, we learn that Phoebe is too willing to obey and conform to all social forms and too reluctant to question any premise or idea that lies apart from her often narrow domestic sphere. It is as if she relies too much upon her heart and not enough upon her intellectual faculties. This weakness is brought out in the brilliant scene where Phoebe meets Jaffrey Pyncheon on the porch. Although her intuitions warn her of danger, she is easily fooled by the Judge's false smile and words. She belongs, writes Hawthorne, to that "trim, orderly, and limit-loving class" that is inclined to believe that "judges, clergymen, and other characters of that eminent stamp and respectability" are incapable of errors or criminal acts. It is this rather naïve side of Phoebe, and non-analytic people like her, that Hawthorne condemns and views as potentially dangerous. Such was the case in the introductory chapter, when Colonel

Pyncheon manipulated the populace, who were all too ready to endorse authority by sentencing Maule to death. Similarly, Phoebe is willing to accept her evil cousin and be swayed by his lies. It is as if she is incapable of either recognising or dealing with evil, and surely she would have helplessly fallen prey to Jaffrey if not for the stubborn pleas of Hepzibah.

In practically all respects, Jaffrey resembles his long dead ancestor, Colonel Pyncheon. Jaffrey's crime against Clifford, getting him convicted for an act of which he is innocent, is obviously reminiscent of the Colonel's treatment of Maule. In both cases, the Pyncheons have abused their positions of respectability in attempts to gain material wealth, and, in both cases, their victims are absolutely powerless to prevent their own destruction. Clifford is protected not by Phoebe, who is herself helpless against Jaffrey, but by Hepzibah. Hepzibah, of course, has been aware of the true character of Jaffrey since their childhoods, but her solitary ways seem to give her the ability to distinguish good from evil, an ability that appears to be absent in Phoebe's character. This is illustrated when Phoebe and Hepzibah discuss Holgrave. Holgrave's opinions distress Phoebe, leading her to consider that her association with him might lead to some form of adversity. Hepzibah, on the other hand, easily perceives that behind Holgrave's perhaps too liberal views is a good

and trustworthy person. Thus Hawthorne seems to imply that those who live in isolation, apart from the "sympathetic chain", comprehend human nature more perceptively. Such is the case with the 'outsider' figures mentioned on pages forty-four and forty-five, who are often able to discern the 'truth' about mankind, but only by severing their ties with humanity. Ethan Brand is a perfect example, and it is interesting to note that Hawthorne employs words similar to those emphasized in The House of the Seven Gables to depict his regrettable separation. "He had lost his hold of the magnetic chain of humanity. He was no longer a brother man, opening the chambers or the dungeons of our common nature by the key of holy sympathy, which give him a right to share in all its secrets; he was now a cold observer, looking on mankind as the subject of his experiment, and, at length, converting man and woman to be his puppets, and pulling the wires that moved them to such degrees of crime as were demanded for his study".[4]

What is striking in Hawthorne's opening description of Jaffrey Pyncheon, is his appearance of respectability and opulence. "One perceived him to be a personage of mark, influence, and authority; and, especially, you could feel just as certain that he was opulent as if he had exhibited his bank account, or as if you had seen him touching the twigs of the Pyncheon-elm, and Midas-like, transmuting them to gold" (I55). From the "wide and rich gravity" of

his apparel to the glitter of his "gold-bowed spectacles" and gold-headed cane, one is reminded of the newly built, skilfully dressed house of the seven gables. Like the house, Judge Pyncheon is adorned to impress society, to make mankind regard him with awe. Furthermore, the recently constructed house, as a symbol of its master's authority and position in the world, helped to conceal the Colonel's crime. In other words, the glitter of the house glossed over hidden sins. The Judge's mode of dress and his deceptive smile act in a comparable manner, cloaking his obsessive and dangerous designs and disguising his evil monomania.

Like Colonel Pyncheon and his house and Hepzibah and her house, the description of Jaffrey's mansion gives us insight into his character. It is a "tall and stately edifice", floored with "mosaic-work of costly marbles", with plate-glass, gilded cornices, gorgeously painted ceilings and a "lofty dome". Obviously, there are parallels between this home and the house of the seven gables of one hundred and sixty years ago. The houses reflect that for both Jaffrey and his long dead ancestor, "forms are of paramount importance" (255). Employing these forms, both men manipulate and prey upon mankind.

Thus far each character examined has represented a distinct way of living, of creating a home in relation to the "chain of humanity". The gabled house, of course, is the device used to define each character's stand. Hepzibah

and Phoebe embrace the contrasting forms of a solitary and a 'social' existence. Jaffrey, on the other hand, lives in society by ruling over it. Like Colonel Pyncheon, his life is governed by "the big, heavy solid unrealities, such as gold, landed estate, offices of trust and emolument and public honors." Hence he offers a direct contrast to another major character, Clifford. Like the comparisons between Phoebe and Hepzibah, the comparative descriptions of Jaffrey and Clifford are couched in opposites. Jaffrey represents strength and massiveness, Clifford is associated with weakness and delicacy. Hence Jaffrey Pyncheon, like Phoebe, is described in terms of "substance". There is, however, a crucial difference. The image of sunlight is often utilized to signify the domestic virtues of Phoebe, as her force quietly contradicts the dark gloom of Hepzibah's solitary frame of mind. Similarly, Hawthorne writes that the Judge's smile could almost instantly change from acrid and disagreeable to "the sunniest complacency and benevolence" (156), but in his encounter with Phoebe, we see that his expression produces too much sunshine (198). Like the shine on his boots, Hawthorne states, Jaffrey's smiles must have cost him "a good deal of hard labour to bring them out and preserve them." Therefore the light images surrounding Jaffrey are glaring, lacking in any warmth, as is his manner of socializing, which is deliberately manufactured to promote his egotistical endeavors. Clifford's faded

attire and unkempt appearance indicate his similarity to Hepzibah, for both have been ruined by years of isolated living. His long and lonesome years in prison have given him little in life to grasp. "Continually, as we may express it, he faded away out of his place; or, in other words, his mind and consciousness took their departure, leaving his wasted, gray and melancholy figure, -- a substantial emptiness, a material ghost, -- to occupy his seat at table" (183). No description could contrast more with that of Jaffrey Pyncheon, whose concern with the "solid unrealities" gives him a weighty and worldly appearance.

Clifford's relation to the house and to the concept of 'home' is more difficult to define than those of the other major characters. Years of confinement in prison have made Clifford seem like a very young child, always in need of protection. His over-sensitivity and adoration for beauty further weakens his character, making him unable to perceive anything but appearances. Thus he rejects Hepzibah's loving attempts to care for him because of her physical demeanor. The worship of beauty and excessive sensitivity are primary characteristics of Fleda Vetch in The Spoils of Poynton. As will be seen, Fleda, like Clifford, experiences great difficulties with appearances. Clifford's helplessness and fragility is best summed up by Hepzibah when she considers the possible result of a meeting between Clifford and his predatory cousin, Jaffrey. "It would be

like flinging a porcelain vase, with already a crack in it, against a granite column" (262). Clifford's obsession for the beautiful makes the house of the seven gables, with its darkness and decay, an abhorrent place for him. Hepzibah, on the other hand, gains comfort from her solitary confinement, because the house is swamped with symbols and images of her aristocratic lineage, and before the opening of the cent shop and the arrival of Phoebe, we see her living almost exclusively in the unhealthy atmosphere of the past. Clifford's long years of dismal imprisonment -- which probably aggravate his obsession for beholding beauty -- have obliterated his past. As Hawthorne states, he lives in the "impalpable Now", and as such his function is to represent the dangers of life without a past, and offers yet another contrast to Hepzibah's way of life.

The past and its relationship to the concept of 'home' is one of the crucial themes in The House of the Seven Gables. Holgrave, the final major character to be discussed, is intrigued by the way time shapes houses and the families who inhabit them. In an argument with Phoebe, whose domesticity makes her reject all motions which go against accepted ideas of home and family, Holgrave states,

> To plant a family! This idea is at the bottom of most of the wrong and mischief which men do. The truth is, that, once in every half century, at longest, a family should be merged into the great obscure mass of humanity, and forget all about its ancestors (229).

According to Holgrave, it is this enactment of the 'idea'

down through the decades that has isolated the house of the seven gables from mankind (the gabled house, therefore, provides a contrast to the houses in Hawthorne's fiction that are not spoiled by time and that represent warmth and social companionship). Holgrave, in part, echoes the sentiments of Hawthorne. On the opening page of The House of the Seven Gables, Hawthorne writes, "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" (I25).[5] Thus the words of Hawthorne, either in the narrative voice or through Holgrave, compose the 'moral' for the romance, pointing to the author's absolute distrust of family homes and lineages. Obviously, the twisted aims of Judge Pyncheon, the absurd appearance and actions of Hepzibah and the hens in the garden, and most importantly, the appearance of the house itself, all bear testimony to Hawthorne's introductory warning.[6]

To divorce oneself from the past, however, can mean danger. Clifford, as stated earlier, provides the sternest example of a person who has no connection with his ancestral past. As well, when Phoebe and Holgrave are alone together, we learn by comparing their opposite natures, that Holgrave's reluctance to see any benefit from the past

has affected him adversely, and at one point he is portrayed in terms that remind us of Coverdale or Ethan Brand. "He was too calm and cool an observer, Phoebe felt his eye, often; his heart, seldom, or never" (225). Holgrave's cold intellectual nature clashes with the intuitive sympathy of Phoebe, and because of his reformist zeal and aversion to the idea of family homes, Holgrave is every bit as isolated and alone as Hepzibah, who is imprisoned by relics from her ancestral past.

Thus in each major character, Hawthorne appears to be installing a separate means of regarding life within the "sympathetic chain of human nature", and by bringing each character into a series of encounters with the others, opposite characteristics are defined and the effect that each contrasting state of mind has on the other is illustrated. When the romance is examined, chapter by chapter, it is seen that there is an unusually large number of these encounters, and sometimes Hawthorne employs the space of an entire chapter to catalogue the results. Such is the case when Phoebe meets the Judge, and later when she encounters Holgrave. The initial encounters between Phoebe and Clifford and Hepzibah and Jaffrey are not dealt with quite as extensively, but they are nevertheless very important in determining different frames of mind. Hawthorne, in fact, 'builds' characters by repeatedly exposing them to other characters, allowing us to observe the clash between

opposites (so successful is Hawthorne in portraying character by these methods that he only has to hint at a possible meeting between Jaffrey and Clifford in order to kindle in our minds the fearful results). Hence, as T. S. Eliot has stated, character is seen in "relation" to other characters.

It is not unfair to say that the house itself is similarly examined. It, too, is compared and contrasted both to different characters and their actions and to the immediate environment (this method of analysis is necessary for it will be remembered that Hawthorne has made the house more than just a 'setting' by applying extensive human characteristics to it). The central position in the romance is filled by the house, not by the characters -- or rather, it is the centre about which the actions of the characters and their states of mind are seen to rotate -- and as Hyatt Waggoner states, in Hawthorne: A Critical Study, the entire structure of the work illustrates this point:

> A careful reading of the story will disclose no significant feature of structure or texture, image or concept, that is not associated in some way with the suggestions contained in the house and the elm. .... The house is both setting and symbol: it is the antagonist in a drama of good and evil". 7

The house, Waggoner states, is represented by images of curves and angles, created primarily by the "seven acutely peaked gables." Moreover, in the portrayal of Hepzibah, the owner of the house, Hawthorne emphasizes her angularity.

"Forth she steps into the dusky, time-darkened passage; a tall figure, clad in black silk, with a long and shrunken waist, feeling her way towards the stairs like a near-sighted person, as in truth she is" (I4I). Once again, therefore, character and setting are closely tied together. In contrast to the gabled house and Hepzibah is the elm tree, which is of wide circumference and towers above the house. It is the cyclical shape of the elm that signifies its opposition to the angular house, and Hawthorne is quick to point out what each shape means. The tree, Hawthorne writes, "gave beauty to the old edifice, and seemed to make it a part of nature" (I38). In The House of the Seven Gables, the circle image represents nature and its rejuvenative qualities, and it is no accident that Phoebe, from the ringlets in her hair to her anything but angular figure, is associated not only with light, but with the circle. When Phoebe stands, for the first time, on the threshold of the house, Hawthorne compares the 'circle' to the 'angle'. "The sordid and ugly luxuriance of gigantic weeds that grew in the angle of the house, and the heavy projection that overshadowed her, and the time-worn frame-work of the door, -- none of these things belonged to her sphere" (I62). The elm tree, despite its great age, is green and healthy. Phoebe, despite being the latest offspring of what appears to be the knarled and decaying Pyncheon family tree, is pictured in 'full bloom.' Obviously, the circle is meant to underline the redemptive

capabilities of nature and life, and as such it represents a concept of time which stands in opposition to the manner in which time is portrayed in the angular house. The images surrounding the gables emphasize the idea of time as a linear force. From its construction, we have observed the house in a state of constant decay. The house, like its present owner, represents time as destruction.

The house, however, exhibits circular images as well, such as the sun dial, the arched entrance and the arched window above it. It is the circle, especially the arched window, that becomes more strongly emphasized in the later chapters, when Phoebe's influence upon the house and its occupants becomes more pronounced. Significantly, Clifford, who has rejected Hepzibah for Phoebe, spends a great deal of his time in front of the arched window. When, in the chapter entitled "The Arched Window", Clifford attempts to hurl himself into the political procession passing beneath his window, we may see him in effect attempting to re-enter the "surging stream of human sympathies" (218), the rejuvenative force which, as has been earlier discussed, Phoebe represents. For Clifford, Phoebe stands for reconciliation with his fellow man and as the means of escape from the pressing decay of the house, from linear time. Hence Hawthorne relates that the reason for his thwarted action was that "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 to himself" (2I8-2I9). This is obviously the rejuvenation which the circle, through the forces of nature, depicts.

It is evident that Clifford's attempts at some form of regeneration will not succeed unless a great act transpires. This seems to be the case when Jaffrey is discovered to be dead, and Clifford and Hepzibah flee from the house. It is hinted, however, that their escape is doomed to failure because they have "passed from the wide shelter of the Pyncheon-elm" (269), and thus Clifford and Hepzibah run not only from linear decay but also leave behind the 'circle', that is the redemptive qualities of 'natural' time. This chapter, "The Flight of the Two Owls", is the only chapter in which the action takes place neither in the house nor its immediate vicinity, and yet there is a crucial comparison between the house and the train, and the related concepts of 'home' and man within isolation and time once again emerge as important considerations. The train is set in direct opposition to the house, and through its rapid movement, another 'type' of time is introduced. "The spires of meeting-houses seemed set adrift from their foundations; the broad-based hills glided away. Everything was unfixed from its age-long rest, and moving at whirlwind speed in a direction opposite to their own" (270-27I).

Finally freed from the house and from the threat of Jaffrey, and affected by the speed of the train, Clifford endeavors to criticize mankind's manner of creating homes in a way that is reminiscent of Holgrave. In speaking to the conductor, however, Clifford includes the angle and the circle in his theories. "You are aware, my dear sir, -- you must have observed it, in your own experience, -- that all human progress is in a circle; or, to use a more accurate and beautiful figure, in an ascending spiral curve" (272). A moment before this statement, Hawthorne has supplied a literal example of this "ascending spiral", when, on board the moving train, a party of young people playfully toss a ball from one side of the car to the other. The result, if one were to plot the progress of the ball, would be a spiral curve.

One may justifiably view the spiral as Clifford's attempt to reconcile the circle to the line, the elm to the house, renewable nature to age and decay. The meaning of the "ascending spiral curve" cannot be mistaken. Hawthorne writes of the train, "Sleep; sport; business; graver or lighter study; and the common and inevitable movement onward! It was life itself" (271)! It is "the great current of human life", a phrase that rekindles the image of the political procession as a "surging river". Rapid movement highlights yet another description of humanity. When the crank of the organ grinder turns, miniature figures frantically

go about their activities. The spiral curve, therefore, represents mankind and society. Its time is measured in the steady, upward flow of 'progress', which is opposed both to the dilapidation of linear time and the ever-repeating circles of natural time, and it is within this "current" of life that Clifford seeks his re-birth. Hepzibah, on the other hand, is denied even the illusion of re-birth, for the image of the house, the object that has prevented her communion with mankind, constantly appears to her through the window of the train. Clifford, however, fails to remain fastened to the spiral curve for long, and when he and his sister alight at a way station, they are confronted by the isolated and dismal appearance of a ruined wooden church and a deserted farm house, and thus once more angular images of decay become prominent. It seems that a greater act than than just fleeing to the "ascending spiral" of society must take place before Clifford and Hepzibah will gain their freedom from the ancient 'curse' of the gabled house.

Quite a different method of observing time occurs conjointly with the attempted escape of Hepzibah and Clifford. As Hawthorne almost ruthlessly mocks the attitudes and ambitions of the recently deceased Jaffrey, we notice that time, in relation to the Judge's corpse, renders the 'time' of mankind -- the spiral curve -- meaningless. An entire day's future agenda is satirically voiced in order to raise the Judge, but to no avail. The motion of the previous

chapter has been replaced by total stasis. The failure of the Judge to rise, the fly that walks unhindered over his open eyes, strongly remind us of time as a line, as death and decay. Yet the circle image appears in this chapter as well. The narrator begins his watch of Jaffrey in the fading light of sunset and continues to observe him in the darker shades of twilight, moonlight and almost total darkness. But by the end of the chapter, we have returned to the light of early morning. Furthermore, the ticking of the clock, and the movement of its hands around its rounded face, remind the reader that a cyclical and predetermined act is taking place. The Judge's death is connected to the Colonel's death -- the incidents surrounding them are the same -- and thus the present flows into the past for the original crime and death have been repeated.

The circle images continue in the following chapter, and the less bright shades of light give way to sunshine, as Phoebe, representing the circle of re-birth and regeneration, returns. Hawthorne, however, by utilizing the recurring images of day and night and light and darkness, emphasizes that both the death of Jaffrey, and Phoebe's future redemption of the 'race' of the Pyncheons, are integral parts of the repeating wheel of occurrences. Along these lines, it is interesting to note that even in the shriveled figure of Hepzibah are the 'seeds' for the new generations. Thus, in the Bible, Hepzibah is the name

to be borne by Jerusalem when restored. "Thou shalt be called Hepzibah, ...and thy land shall be inhabited" (Isa., 62, 4). The most important circle image in this chapter is the elm, which dominates the opening scene. "The Pyncheon-elm, throughout its great circumference, was all alive, and full of the morning sun and a sweetly-tempered little breeze, which lingered within its verdant sphere, and set a thousand leafy tongues a-whispering all at once" (287). The morning sun even affects the house, giving it the appearance of "antique gentility". Furthermore, the flowers long ago planted by Alice, "were flaunting in rich beauty and full of bloom, today, and seemed, as it were, a mystic expression that something within the house was consummated" (287). The consummated act is, of course, the death of Jaffrey, which paves the way for the regeneration of the Pyncheons as Phoebe enters the transformed house.

One more cluster of images has, from the beginning, surrounded Phoebe. In Chapter Five, Phoebe discovers a "beautiful species of white rose" in the garden. Hawthorne writes that at "a fair distance", it looked as if it had been brought from Eden. In Chapter Seven, Phoebe is compared to Eve, when she lets the morning sunshine into the house. In Chapter Twenty, entitled "The Flower of Eden", these images dominate. The return of Phoebe, and her symbolic coupling with Holgrave, leave no doubt in the reader's mind that we have witnessed, with the death of Jaffrey --

and incidently, the death of his son in Europe -- the extinction of the degenerate Pyncheons and the beginning of a healthy race no longer isolated from mankind. Obviously, this is signified by Hepzibah, Clifford, Holgrave and Phoebe leaving the gabled house to begin anew. Clifford makes this point evident. "I thought of you both, as we came down the street, and beheld Alice's Posies in full bloom. And so the flower of Eden has bloomed, likewise in this old, darksome house, to-day" (301)!

Of the Eden imagery, Hyatt Waggoner states,

> These connections with the Eden myth take us of course to the heart of the story. For Adam's sin, like that of the Pyncheons, was pride; the penalty, alienation from God and man and the corruption of man and nature -- the introduction, as it has been interpreted , of death; and the cure, love. And the Christian myth of the origin and cure of evil embodies the concept of a cycle as surely as the ancient figure of the wheel of fortune and the pagan vegetation myths do. For the story told is one of union, alienation, and reunion, withdrawal and return. The Eden allusions then help to expand Pyncheon history into man's history. [8]

In the end, the circular elm tree is, so to speak, given the last word. "The Pyncheon-elm, moreover, with what foliage the September gale had spared to it, whispered unintelligible prophecies" (307). Perhaps, following the Eden imagery, the elm signifies the Tree of Knowledge, and the above quotation seems to credit it with the predetermined awareness of all recent actions, and that they are just a minute part of the ever returning cycle of time.

Hawthorne has built a very complex and elaborate

pattern of symbols and images to emphasize and compare aspects within the house of the seven gables. One character is compared to another, light is contrasted to darkness and angle to circle, and the concept of individual isolation is compared to the "sympathetic chain of humanity" and the rush of society. The problem of living in this world may only be resolved within the framework of time. What eventually frees Hepzibah, who represents the linear depiction of time as decay and age, and Clifford, who espouses the "ascending spiral curve", the movement of society, is natural time ever returning in a cycle, as represented by Phoebe, which resurrects the past in order to set it 'right' and begin anew. Holgrave is a Maule and Phoebe is a Pyncheon. Thus 'pride' is vanquished by the mingling of aristocratic blood with plebeian blood. Moreover, in this important coupling, we are meant to see a blending of conservative with liberal and the heart with the intellect. Yet despite the significance of the union, it is impossible not to feel some form of dissatisfaction with the ending. By the time we observe the corpse of Judge Pyncheon, the images have become too complicated, and the house, as the central symbol, has embraced too many complex aspects to warrant such a 'neat' conclusion. Indeed, at one point in the final chapter, Hawthorne acknowledges that his reconciliative ending and his concept of time as a circle cannot comfortably envelop every aspect that is contained in The House of the

Seven Gables. "It is a truth....that no great mistake, whether acted or endured, in our mortal sphere, is ever really set right. Time, the continual vicissitude of circumstances, and the invariable inopportunity of death, render it impossible" (304).

Throughout Hawthorne's examination of the house and its occupants a primary concern has been the nature of appearances. The Judge's false smile makes him appear to be a kindly and trustworthy man. Hepzibah's involuntary scowl, on the other hand, gives her the appearance of being anything but the kind-hearted old spinster that she is. The garden appears, at one point, to exhibit only decay and disorder, but, at another point in time, appears young and regenerative. Alice's Posies, which in Chapter Nineteen, give the house a "mystic expression", appeared but "only a week ago" to be weeds, growing in the angle between the front gables. Moonlight makes the garden appear "transfigured by a charm of romance" (246). It also dances across the dead Judge's "unchanging features", transforming his previously horrid appearance. When viewed from close range, the violent "rush and roar" of the political procession stands uppermost. When viewed from a distant vantage point, it becomes, by "its remoteness", slow-rolling and majestic. Finally, and most importantly, the house is seen as a symbol of decay and misery, but in the morning sunlight it strikes the onlooker as an abode of

"solid happiness". Hawthorne writes, "So little faith is due to external appearance, that there was really an inviting aspect over the venerable edifice, conveying an idea that its history must be a decorous and happy one, and such as would be delightful for a fire-side tale" (287). A number of houses are wrapped up in the house of the seven gables, and we see the home from so many different angles that, in the end, it becomes objectively difficult to discern more than just its prominent architectural features. As has been discussed, the house as 'seen' through Phoebe's eyes is certainly distinct from the house 'seen' through the eyes of Holgrave, Jaffrey, Hepzibah or Clifford. Each character's point of view shapes the house, and the house in turn shapes them. The appearance of practically everything, in the romance, is relative to shades of light, time, points of view and so on. Thus the final events -- the coupling of Phoebe and Holgrave and the departure of the entire 'family' for happier climes, which finally gives them a joyful way of life --are not as much absolute or literal statements as they are symbolic ones, which are meant to rectify all the ambiguous images and appearances which Hawthorne has uncovered in his work.[9]

The problem of appearances, about relative points of view, and in particular, in relation to houses, is central to The Spoils of Poynton, where the major character's perceptions and imaginings form the framework for the novel.

Authorial commentary is rare, much rarer than in The House of the Seven Gables, and we must weigh evidence and opinions through the eyes and mind of Fleda Vetch. A crucial problem in our interpretation of The Spoils of Poynton, therefore, is discerning how much one may trust Fleda's subjective point of view.

Aspects and problems that were observed and discussed by the usually reliable narrator in The House of the Seven Gables, have been transformed by James and related directly to his leading character. For example, images in The Spoils of Poynton are often created and shaped by the mind of Fleda Vetch. On the other hand, images in The House of the Seven Gables, such as circles and angles, are sometimes employed as 'objective' devices to judge and measure objects and their affiliations. Certain actions undergo a similar transformation. In The Spoils of Poynton, the long sought for return of the furniture to its proper home appears to be comparable to the unifying ending of The House of the Seven Gables. In both cases, a reconciliative act, an act which sets a 'crime' from the past in order, takes place. The reconciliative act in The Spoils of Poynton, however, is only produced by the subjective interpretations of Fleda Vetch. It is fabricated by her imagination. James, therefore, has taken an aspect of Hawthorne's romance and, according to his literary views outlined in Chapter Two, strengthened it, by making it dependant upon the mind of his leading

character. Unlike in The House of the Seven Gables, practically everything in The Spoils of Poynton is tied to the protagonist.

Yet if Fleda's thoughts compose the major framework in the novel, then the house, Poynton, must be seen as inhabiting the central position in her point of view. Although Fleda spends relatively little time at the house, we cannot doubt that her relationship to it remains uppermost, from her first viewing until the end of the book. "To give it all up, to die to it -- that thought ached in her breast" (I9). Thus the house and the way it is related both to her character and to the overall composition is every bit as important to The Spoils of Poynton as it is to The House of the Seven Gables, despite the fact that James, unlike Hawthorne, does not supply the reader with lengthy narrative descriptions and observations of the house.

Poynton, however, is not the first house to play an important role in James's novel. Chapter One opens on the grounds of the aptly named house, Waterbath. We 'see' it primarily through the descriptive reactions of Mrs. Gereth, who is quick to point out that it vulgarly represents a series of tasteless traits that will not be found at her home. Waterbath is smeared in "acres of varnish" (8), and displays almost endless "imbecilities of decoration" (5). Mrs. Gereth's repugnance to the "intimate ugliness" of Waterbath is so overwhelming that, during the previous

night, she "had been kept awake for hours by the wallpaper in her room" (5).

It is on the grounds at Waterbath that Mrs. Gereth first spots Fleda, instantly recognizing in this strange girl the kindred qualities of a sufferer under the "aesthetic misery" of the home. (The first phrase that James employs to depict Fleda is that of "deep and lonely meditation", and these words will remain closely associated to Fleda and her point of view throughout the novel.) Two important aspects stand out in the introductory meeting between the women. Firstly, the overly descriptive phrases and words of Mrs. Gereth and Fleda should make us suspect of both characters from the beginning. "'Isn't it too dreadful?' 'Horrible -- Horrible!' cried Mrs. Gereth, with a laugh, 'and it's really a comfort to be able to say it'" (7). This flowery style of language is in evidence throughout the entire novel. Often its principal function is to supply a source of comedy, but it also effectively underlines qualities of each character.

To some extent Hawthorne, in The House of the Seven Gables, employs similar devices. When Jaffrey seeks admittance to the house, only to be stopped by Hepzibah, his plea for entrance, his selection of overly elaborate phrases, illustrates his dishonesty and evil.

> Ay, you little know me, Cousin Hepzibah! You little know this heart! It throbs at the thought of meeting him! There lives not the human being (except yourself, -- and you not more than I) who has shed so many

> tears for Clifford's calamity! You behold some of them now. There is none who would so delight to promote his happiness! Try me, Hepzibah! -- try me, cousin! -- try the man who you have treated as your enemy and Clifford's! -- try Jaffrey Pyncheon, and you shall find him true, to the heart's core! (254)

Although Jaffrey's words hide a great lie, he cannot help uttering at least partial truths, for he reveals both the ignorance people have of his real nature, as well as his almost rabid eagerness to get at Clifford. In a comparable vein, Fleda and Mrs. Gereth use words to describe their actions, but they also illustrate their 'hidden' characteristics. For them, their choice of terms only flatters them and convinces them of the 'truth', but for the reader, their words indicate their defects. Such is the case when Mrs. Gereth compares herself to St. Joan (83), and Fleda labels her actions as those of a nun (175). At times, therefore, James and Hawthorne indicate character by having the character inadvertently display some of his traits. Instead of simply describing these traits, character is revealed to us 'first-hand'. Such a method tends to slow down the action, making us focus on a thorough psychological examination of each major character.

A second important point, in the introductory conversation between Mrs. Gereth and Fleda, is brought to light by Mrs. Gereth when she blames the "ugliness" of Waterbath on the "abnormal nature of the Brigstocks". Although once more the use of the particular words reflects at least as much upon the personality of the character who

spoke them as it does upon the Brigstocks, it can be seen that James is associating homes with their owners, making them reflect the personalities of the characters in a manner similar to Hawthorne. In The House of the Seven Gables, Jaffrey's mansion, Hepzibah's house and the past house of Colonel Pyncheon were utilized to emphasize the nature of each character. Similarly, Waterbath underlines the lack of taste and other cultural accoutrements of the Brigstocks. Of Mrs. Brigstock, James writes, "She had a face of which it was impossible to say anything but that it was pink, and a mind that it would be possible to describe only if one had been able to mark it in a similar fashion" (I23). Mona's description is hardly more flattering. "She belonged to the type in which speech is an unaided emission of sound and the secret of being is impenetrably and incorruptibly kept. Her expression would have been beautiful if she had had one,...." (9). Obviously, the arrangement of Waterbath illustrates and enlarges upon these characteristics.

Mrs. Gereth's character, as seen through the opening descriptions of Poynton, offers a direct contrast to Waterbath and its residents. "Poynton was the record of a life. It was written in great syllables of colour and form, the tongues of other countries and the hands of rare artists" (I8-I9). It is the "things" of Poynton, the rare treasures of decor, that, arranged by Mrs. Gereth, illustrate her "high pride" and "fine arrogance". Mrs. Gereth and her late husband

created Poynton with, "the genius, the passion, the patience of the collector" (I2). The "clear corridors" of Poynton and its overall atmosphere are strongly reminiscent of Jaffrey's mansion, and even the newly built gabled house. With all the owners, the word 'pride' is closely associated, and the glitter that these houses show to the outside world is indicative of this. James, through the words of Mrs. Gereth, draws our attention to the perverse aspects of her proud obsession. Owen's decision to remove his mother from Poynton is strenuously objected to because, according to Mrs. Gereth, "No account whatever had been taken of her relation to her treasures, of the passion with which she had waited for them, worked for them, picked them over, made them worthy of each other and the house, watched them, loved them, lived with them" (I3).

Throughout the novel, Poynton is portrayed as more of a museum or treasure trove than as a warm and comfortable home. Its owner, like the original owner of the house of the seven gables, has left her proud and inhospitable mark on the home, isolating it from the rest of mankind. Like Hawthorne, therefore, James seems concerned with the ways in which 'civilized' life, as represented by the principal symbol and image of the house, becomes corrupted and degenerative, and within this design, both authors concern themselves with the clash of innocence and evil. In The House of the Seven Gables, the meeting on the threshold

between Jaffrey and Phoebe clearly signifies the power of Jaffrey's demonic aims and the helplessness of Phoebe. Phoebe is 'saved' by the intrusion of Hepzibah, but no such fortunate friend protects Fleda, and thus when she passes through the threshold of Poynton and into the house, we are made aware of the evil influence of Mrs. Gereth and her "things". The not altogether pleasant word "submission" is used to describe Fleda's initial response to Poynton, and there is a distinct danger in the way she gives into this influence. "Pre-occupations and scruples fell away from her; she had never known a greater happiness than the week she passed in this iniation" (I8) (one is reminded, at this point, of Buitenhuis's comments, discussed in Chapter Two of this paper, concerning James's literary use of the "sordidness" of life at the time of writing The Spoils of Poynton and other works. Such an interest ties him, perhaps more tightly than in his earlier works, to Hawthorne's constant examination of the relationship between innocence and evil. No better example of this can be found than What Maisie Knew, published in I897).

Fleda's actions, in The Spoils of Poynton, are governed by the manner in which she views her relation to the house and its "things". If Mrs. Gereth performed the early role of temptress and initiator into the house and its "mysteries", we can see, from the middle of Chapter Three onwards, that Fleda's relationship to the older woman

changes rapidly as she feels more and more personally involved with both the house and the confrontation surrounding its occupancy. Understandably, Fleda views Mrs. Gereth's extreme stand on Poynton as both tactless and unreasonable, and decides that Owen and Mona deserve better treatment. The event that transpires at the end of Chapter Three, when Mrs. Gereth, much to Fleda's embarrassment, pushes her upon Owen, only helps to accelerate Fleda's growing conviction that Mrs. Gereth is in the 'wrong'. Later, when Mrs. Gereth ransacks the contents of Poynton and carries away the spoils, there can be no doubt that Fleda's allegiance to Mrs. Gereth is on the wane.

From her introduction, we see that Fleda is portrayed as both impressionable and idealistic, and the glitter of Poynton provides the catalyst for "the emotions of a hungry girl whose sensibility was almost as great as her opportunities for comparison had been small" (I9). Fleda, in her innocence, reacts against the proud and greedy motives of Mrs. Gereth, she reacts against anything that threatens the "perfect beauty" (I8) of Poynton. Fleda, therefore, comes to see her task as that of the guardian of this "beauty". "The house was all" (I90).

One of the major patterns of imagery, in The Spoils of Poynton, is that of battle imagery. The words that are employed in this specific sense help to illustrate the way Fleda envisions her role in relation to the house and its

furniture. She finds herself as spokeswoman and arbiter for Owen, and when she must inform Mrs. Gereth of Owen's decision to force his mother to vacate the premises, the unpleasantness of her task is related in military terms. "Her heart failed her, after Owen had returned to London, with the ugliness of the duty -- with the ugliness, indeed, of the whole close conflict" (33). But Mrs. Gereth will not under any circumstances -- save victory or defeat -- terminate hostile actions, and even though she views her enforced retreat from Poynton as an "amputation" (5I), she compares herself to St. Joan, and like her mentor, will never give in. This fact becomes obvious when Fleda visits Mrs. Gereth at Ricks and discovers that the "things" have been secretly moved. James's use of terms makes it clear that Fleda considers herself to be in the midst of a raging battle. "What indeed was her (Mrs. Gereth's) spoilation of Poynton but the first engagement of a campaign" (57)? Fleda's reaction to the removal of "so picked a guard" is predictable.

> She couldn't care for such things when they came to her in such ways; there was a wrong about them all that turned them all to ugliness. In the watches of the night she saw Poynton dishonoured; she had cared for it as a happy whole, she reasoned, and the parts of it now around her seemed to suffer like chopped limbs (57).

Thus Fleda looks upon her role as that of mediator for the house, and "her mission of finding a way out" (38), that is of curtailing the battle for the sake of Poynton,

becomes her primary occupation. Quick success, however, is not to be found, and Fleda's partial failure as a mediator is signified by a second set of images, those concerning flight. She is pictured several times as a bird in flight (p. 30 and p. 178). As well, chapters often end with Fleda desperately retreating from the action. At the end of Chapter Six, Fleda, in the park, scrambles in an "ugly gallop" from Owen. Chapter Eight ends when Owen departs from Ricks and Fleda "made a dash for the stairs and ran up" (75). Finally, at her sister's home, and once again facing Owen, "she had turned and, scrambling up the stairs, got away from him even faster than she had got away from him at Ricks" (141). Obviously, the name Fleda is emblematic of the frantic motion that is associated with this girl, and what such an image indicates is not only the inability of Fleda, under these conditions, to succeed, but also her dangerous vulnerability and helplessness.

As has been seen, these qualities make Fleda comparable to Hawthorne's Phoebe. In The Spoils of Poynton, however, Fleda's naive imagination and inexperienced emotions are responsible for the threat of self-destructive acts. Phoebe is vulnerable, but only from dangerous 'outside' forces. Fleda's dangers are created by her mind. A third set of images leads directly into the dangerous fantasy world that Fleda has developed. Her primary illusions are often draped in religious terminology. The list of

words and phrases that Fleda amalgamates with her actions strongly point in this direction. Examples are words such as "submission" (I8) and "surrender" (I3), and phrases such as "the vow of a nun" (I75) and "the reward of complete submission" (I63). Chapter Nine, Fleda's interior monologue, is bombarded by such images. In the opening paragraph, Fleda contemplates her relationship to Owen and the 'conflict'. The seemingly incongruous words, "temptation" and "confession" appear. In the second paragraph, Mona joins Owen in Fleda's thoughts and the key words become "courage", "honour" and "pride" to describe Fleda's imagined responsibility to Owen and Mona, her "duty" to keep them from breaking up over her "interference". These groups of words are united in the passage below.

> It would seem intolerably vulgar to have 'ousted' the daughter of the Brigstocks; and merely to have abstained even wouldn't assure her that she had been straight. Nothing was really straight but to justify her little pensioned presence by her use; and now, won over as she was to heroism, she could see her use only as some high and delicate deed. She couldn't do anything at all, unless she could do it with a kind of pride, and there would be nothing to be proud of in having arranged for poor Owen to get off easily. Nobody had a right to get off easily from pledges so deep, so sacred (77-78).

These remarkable words encase Fleda's thoughts within an idealistic framework so warped that we are reminded of some of the leading characters in short stories and novellas written by James at approximately the same period, such as "The Beast in the Jungle" and "In the Cage". In fact, the

combination of words employed, should raise some questions of masochism in Fleda's obsessive desire for martyrdom. In the following chapter, for example, Fleda once again considers her "duty" to Owen and Mona, and, in relation to the religious imagery, it is interesting to note the words in this sentence. "That courage would all come to her if she could only be equally sure that what she should be called upon to do for Owen would be to suffer" (82).[10]

No better proof of Fleda's distorted way of viewing things exists than in her responses to Owen's intimate advances. In Chapter Eight, Owen clearly indicates his desire for matrimony. Fleda, however, ignores, or attempts to ignore, his words. "'I could live here with you. Don't you see what I mean?' Fleda saw perfectly, and, with a face in which she flattered herself that nothing of this vision appeared, gave him her hand and said: 'Good-bye, good-bye'" (73). Later, in Chapter Sixteen, Owen proposes 'point blank' to Fleda. Her reaction is worth careful scrutiny.

> 'Don't you know what I mean, Miss Vetch? I want you to marry me.'
>
> Fleda, at this, put out her hand in charity; she held his own, which quickly grasped it a moment, and if he had described her as shining at him it may be assumed that she shone all the more in her deep, still smile. 'Let me hear a little more about your freedom first,' she said. 'I gather that Mrs. Brigstock was not wholly satisfied with the way you disposed of her question' (133).

This is not the response one would expect from a blushing maiden who has just received such a proposal, but Fleda is so absorbed by the entire intrigue surrounding Poynton and

its "things" that she rather rudely brushes off Owen. James, of course, has provided an explanation to the question of why Owen would not take offence to such a procedure by making him a weak and not altogether bright type of character.[II]

Fleda continually fantasizes about Owen and Mona and 'pure love', and in order to do this she must construct the characters to fit her imaginings. Early in the book, Owen is unfavourably compared, by Fleda, to the articles of furniture at Poynton. "The words, on his lips, had somehow, for Fleda, the sound of washing-stands and copious bedding, and she could well imagine the note it might have struck for Mrs. Gereth" (32-33). A similar method of description was, it will be remembered, used by Hepzibah to compare Jaffrey and Clifford. [See pages 56 and 57]. Comparisons to furniture and other things are, like the house, devices both authors use to define character and emphasize the relationships between setting and character. Within eleven pages, however, James writes this seemingly contradictory statement: "her (Fleda's) eyes had come to rejoice in his manly magnificence more even than they rejoiced in the royal cabinets of the red saloon" (44). What transpires between these statements is that Fleda has seen her 'light' as a special mediator in the conflict, and feels that she has been victorious in her task when Mrs. Gereth reluctantly pledges to 'retreat' to Ricks. A victory for Owen, therefore, is a victory for the "things",

and thus Fleda is bound to regard Owen as something similar to a special piece of furniture. Yet, James writes, "Fleda had an imagination of a drama, a 'great scene', a thing, somehow, of indignity and misery, of wounds inflicted and received, in which indeed, though Mrs. Gereth's presence, with movements and sounds, loomed large to her, Owen remained indistinct and on the whole unaggressive" (42). If Owen is to remain "indistinct", then Mrs. Gereth, in order for the "great scene" to transpire, naturally needs an adversary. Obviously, neither Mona nor her mother, feeble combatants that they are, are imaginable as recipients and perpetrators of "wounds". Fleda, therefore, is referring to her own actions and thus foreshadowing the barrage of insults she will receive from Mrs. Gereth when "the mistress of Poynton" learns that her supposed companion in arms has made her lose Poynton forever. Hence in these later chapters, Mrs. Gereth and Fleda both inflict and receive wounds. Fleda's "indignity and misery" will be her matrimonial sacrifice of Owen, and the subsequent harsh criticism of Mrs. Gereth, in order to see the "unspoiled" love of Owen and Mona rule over the beautiful -- and thus the safe -- grounds of Poynton.

Previous quotations show that Fleda regards Owen as a piece of furniture, and she fights to have him installed at Poynton as she fights to have the rest of the furniture reinstated. First, however, she must make him more worthy of the 'collection'. He must be something more

grand than a "washing-stand". His lack of aggressiveness and individual initiative makes Fleda's unconscious task much easier, for it is in what she terms his "blessed manly weakness" (I40) where she sees part of her "mission". Owen, in short, is a blank slate that Fleda shapes as she pleases, and thus he unquestionably follows Fleda's 'orders', remaining attached to a woman he does not love. Owen's absolute weakness and desire to be led are further illustrated when we see Fleda forever 'putting' words in his mouth. See pages 66 and 7I.

Mona's character is shaped even more so by Fleda. Although they meet but twice, and Mona in her characteristic way remains dense and uncommunicative, Fleda ascribes to her the most noble virtues. The incident on page II5 is a good example. Fleda states that Mona will make high sacrifices to restore the spoils of Poynton. Owen, in his simplistic manner, reveals the true state of Mona's nature when he relates that Mona does not care for the aesthetic beauty of Poynton and desires the restoration of Poynton only because of her greed. Fleda, however, is totally lost in her fictitious puzzle and will once again ignore Owen's words.

> 'Ah, she's not that sort! She wants them herself', he added; 'she wants to feel they're hers; she doesn't care whether I have them or not! And if she can't get them she doesn't want me. If she can't get them she doesn't want anything at all' (II5).

Like Owen, Mona's appearance is shaped by Fleda to suit her own ends. James's references to Mona's expression,

or lack of one, and the conspicuous sound of her name, give us the key as to how Fleda manages to shape her character. Like Da Vinci's Mona Lisa, the strange, almost expressionless form of Mona is moulded by the beholder's imagination.

A major link between The House of the Seven Gables and The Spoils of Poynton is the examination of appearances. It has been seen that Phoebe, Clifford and Fleda are at times unable to interpret appearances correctly. Both authors supply several ways to perceive the nature and effect of appearances. Firstly, the entire framework of images surrounding the house in The House of the Seven Gables, such as angles and circles and light and darkness, illustrates the ever shifting nature of appearances -- the manner in which one's viewpoint is shaped by various elements. James, with his focus on 'character', has aligned his imagery to the mind of Fleda. Yet the images are always utilized to indicate Fleda's relationship to Poynton. Like Hawthorne, James's major image clusters, such as the religious allusions, point directly to an examination of the way appearances affect one's manner of viewing life. Secondly, one learns to distinguish appearances by observing the relationship between one person and another or between a character and his home. Thus the falseness of Jaffrey's smile is best seen in comparison to the smile of Phoebe, and the Colonel's character is best illustrated by his house. Similarly, Mrs. Gereth's nature is revealed by examining the arrangements at Poynton, and both the false

and true impressions and opinions of Mrs. Gereth and Fleda are seen when they come into contact with each other.

It is, therefore, Mrs. Gereth, who, in Chapter Eighteen, exposes Fleda's "idiotic perversity".

> 'What are you, after all, my dear, I should like to know that a gentleman who offers you what Owen offers should have to meet such wonderful exactions, to take such extraordinary precautions about your sweet little scruples?' Her resentment rose to a strange insolence which Fleda took full in the face and which, for the moment at least, had the horrible force to present to her vengefully a showy side of the truth. It gave her a blinding glimpse of lost alternatives (157).

Mrs. Gereth is a difficult character to assess. Her greed and self-pity seem to be her prominent traits in the opening chapters. By the middle chapters, however, when everything depends on Fleda's point of view, it is almost as if James loses sight of her.[12] In the final chapters, when she once again assumes a crucial role, her character has undergone a tremendous transformation. In the earlier parts of the novel, for example, the evil influence of Mrs. Gereth, her almost parasitical behavior towards Fleda, is emphasized. "Almost the only thing she (Mrs. Gereth) took account of in her young friend's soft secret was the excellent use she could make of it -- a use so much to her taste that she refused to feel a hindrance in the quality of the material" (95). When Mrs. Gereth, however, eventually comprehends that her 'campaign' has ended in defeat, she is resigned and gentle. "'I shall need your company', said Mrs. Gereth. Fleda wondered an instant if this were not practically a demand

for penal submission -- for a surrender that, in its complete humility, would be a long expiation. But there was none of the latent chill of the vindictive in the way Mrs. Gereth pursued: 'We can always, as time goes on, talk of them together'" (167). "Them', of course, refers to the furniture of Poynton.

One of Mrs. Gereth's more important functions is that of a foil for Fleda. Thus, like Hawthorne, James often builds characters by exposing their opposite traits. Mrs. Gereth, James states, examines human nature by the scale of cleverness or stupidity. Fleda, on the other hand, perceives people by "direct inspiration" (100). This basic difference is brought to the surface in Chapter Eighteen when Fleda criticises Mrs. Gereth. "You simplify far too much. You always did and you always will. The tangle of life is much more intricate than you've ever, I think, felt it to be. You slash into it', cried Fleda finely, 'with a great pair of shears, you nip at it as if you were one of the Fates" (160)! Hence Mrs. Gereth's greatest weakness is her bull-headed, rampaging way of looking at life. She judges human nature too quickly and forms conclusions that do not permit any shading. Thus Owen is a "blockhead", Fleda an "idiot" and Mrs. Brigstock a "cow". She might be, in this respect, a partially comic representation of both Judge and Colonel Pyncheon, who view life only by its "forms" and who are incapable of perceiving any subtleties.

But the final words in this debate are reserved for Mrs. Gereth, who indicates that the greater fault, Fleda's weakness, is to simplify too little.

> 'I do simplify, doubtless, if to simplify is to fail to comprehend the insanity of a passion that bewilders a young blockhead with bugaboo barriers, with hideous and monstrous sacrifices. I can only repeat that you're beyond me. Your perversity's a thing to howl over. However,' the poor woman continued with a break in her voice, a long hesitation, and then the dry triumph of her will, 'I'll never mention it to you again! Owen I can just make out; for Owen is a blockhead. ...I don't know why you dress up so the fact that he's disgustingly weak' (160-161).

Mrs. Gereth's words, despite their severity, do little to make Fleda abandon her "fairy tale" (34). In the chapters immediately preceeding the destruction of the house there is nevertheless a marked change in Fleda's character. There are no more images of frantic flight associated with her, and instead she is composed, not by acknowledging 'defeat' to her romantic world, but by quietly acting victorious. It appears that only by losing Owen -- or by sacrificing him -- does Fleda achieve her fanciful victory. When Owen and Mona are married, James writes of the extraordinary results for Fleda.

> It was really her obliterated passion that had revived, and with it an immense assent to Mrs Gereth's early judgement of her. She too, she felt, was of the religion, and like any other of the passionately pious she could worship now even in the desert. Yes, it was all for her; far round as she had gone she had been strong enough: her love had gathered in the spoils (169-170).

Fleda's actions, therefore, spring from her intense desire to

become, like Mrs. Gereth, a disciple of aesthetic beauty. All along she has treated her guardianship of the spoils, and her imagined success in restoring them, as a form of initiatory rite of membership into this select cult.

James supplies several motives for Fleda's activities. She is, apart from a distant kinship with her sister, alone in the world. Perhaps because of this Mrs. Gereth and Fleda form a strong bond, and the older lady manages, with ease, to bring the young recluse under her cultural umbrella. On one level, therefore, Mrs. Gereth acts as a much sought, understanding companion, and perhaps, even as a mother. Because of her middle class background, Fleda is entranced by Poynton, for the "things" of Poynton are even more attractive when compared to Fleda's father's collection -- "old brandy-flasks and matchboxes, old calendars and hand-books, intermixed with an assortment of pen-wipers and ashtrays, a harvest he had gathered in from penny bazaars" (104). These items, like the others that have been described throughout the novel, depict the owner's state of mind. Despite her worship of Poynton, however, Fleda is painfully aware that she has no legitimate part in the family feud surrounding them, her role in these proceedings is not 'set'. She may not, in her guileless way of viewing her role, secure her position in this 'family' by marrying Owen because Mrs. Gereth has humiliatingly offered her to him, and besides, Owen is a bit of a "blockhead". Thus Fleda's only means to

enter the cultural family of her dreams is 'directly' through Poynton itself, that is, by becoming the protectress, the 'mother' to Poynton. Her foothold, however, is always unsteady. Thus when Mona, through Owen, questions Fleda's 'rights' in these proceedings, James writes of Fleda that there "was a sudden drop in her great flight" (II8).

Fleda's desire to restore the spoils and become a member of the aesthetic religion may only be realized, in her fantasy, by sacrificing something 'wonderful' in order to bring safety to Poynton. Thus her 'romance' with Owen provides the key, and by 'giving' him back to Mona, Poynton, through her noble act, receives its things. Ironically, Fleda, because she has never loved Owen, gives up nothing.[13] From the beginning Fleda simply uses Owen and the expressionless Mona for her own unconscious sacrifice, and makes them into what she wants.

Near the end of the novel, it appears that Fleda has gained "admittance", and her composed nature reflects this. She is, therefore, "made easier" when Mrs. Gereth assigns to her the position "of a bit of furniture" (I77). She thereby considers herself a member of the 'blessed circle' of the spoils and this is illustrated by her vision of Poynton shortly after reading Owen's second letter, which implores her to take one object from Poynton as a reward for her endeavors. Not surprisingly, Fleda's thoughts are couched in religious phrases. She compares her future journey to

Poynton as the way "a Pilgrim might go to a shrine" (I87). Fleda thinks of herself moving reverently in the "great rooms", gazing at and quietly worshipping each object. If these allusions fail to make us see that Fleda has made Poynton her religious house of devotion, her cathedral, then the item that she desires to take for herself should make it clear. "At bottom she inclined to the Maltese cross" (I88). This, of course, is Fleda's hand-picked symbol for her sacrifice.

On one level, the burning of Poynton is an ironic comment on the efforts of Fleda. Her desire to secure an item from Poynton illustrates that behind her high motives of sacrifice lies her greed. She is, therefore, more like Mrs. Gereth than she would care to admit, for she is led back to Poynton by her pure and simple desire to possess. On another level, however, Fleda's failure to enter the "shrine" and to secure the cross signifies that her sacrifice has been in vain, for she has been robbed of the aesthetic symbol of her efforts, and her 'religion' cannot exist without its symbol and place of worship. Perhaps this explains the incredibly empty note on which the novel ends.

> 'Is there an up-train?' she asked.
> 'In seven minutes.'
> She came out on the platform: everywhere she met the smoke. She covered her face with her hands.
> 'I'll go back' (I92).

The maze of false impressions and appearances seem to leave Fleda in the end -- not because she has participated

in a form of symbolic reunion, as is the case in The House of the Seven Gables, but because she is forever denied it. Her desire to roam the "clear corridors" of Poynton and secure the Maltese cross, thus on a symbolic level consummating her demand for martyrdom and beauty, is prevented by the fire. With the fire comes the deflation of Fleda's fantasies and the termination of the complex images and symbols that she has unconsciously utilized to enshrine the recently destroyed house.

The manner in which Fleda is forced to turn away from the ruination of Poynton and its spoils provides a direct contrast to the way in which Hepzibah, Clifford, Phoebe and Holgrave leave the gabled house. Hawthorne informs us that they "bade a final farewell to the abode of their forefathers, with hardly more emotion than if they had made it their arrangement to return thither at tea-time" (307). The four former occupants of the house have formed a 'family' based on love and friendship. Because of this, Hepzibah no longer depends upon the 'comforts' of the house's gloomy interior. For Fleda, on the other hand, Poynton became a type of family . She invested her love in the house and in the spoils.

Notes to Chapter Three

1 "The Artist of the Beautiful", I believe, shows Hawthorne's sentiments on this point most clearly. Warland, the protagonist, is both admired for his ability to stand alone and condemned for his almost egotistical separateness. See R. H. Fogle, "The Artist of the Beautiful", in A. Kaul, ed., Hawthorne: A Collection of Critical Essays, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966), and for a general discussion of Hawthorne's often ambiguous view of art see Millicent Bell, Hawthorne's View of the Artist, (New York: State University of New York Press, 1962).

2 Edgar A. Dryden, "Hawthorne's Castle in the Air: Form and Theme in The House of the Seven Gables", English Literary History, 38 (1971), p. 299.

3 Why Hawthorne represents the social and communal aspects of Phoebe as "substance" becomes more understandable by examining "The Artist of the Beautiful". Here, the solitary Warland, who, like Clifford, strives for the beautiful, is depicted as a weak and shadowy man, lacking in substance when compared to the strong and amiable blacksmith, Danforth. Danforth, like Phoebe, seems to represent a type of communal spirit, and his heavy iron forge stands in direct contrast to Warland's delicately wrought creation, a mechanical butterfly. Thus it appears that Hawthorne depicts the person who is part of "the sympathetic chain" in terms of "substance" and the isolated individual in the opposite terms, and although the 'chain' is not always painted in rosy colours -- in "The Artist of the Beautiful" for instance, it is often seen as a burdensome weight on the creative person -- the solitary individual is in great danger of vanishing into a form of ghostly nothingness. Clifford is a good example. The further he wanders from his fellow man, the more he is pictured as a shadowy ghost.

4 Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Ethan Brand", in The Celestial Railroad and Other Stories, (Toronto: Signet, 1963), p. 285.

5 It is tempting to compare Hawthorne's use of the word "germ" to James's. For both Hawthorne and James, the germ is simply the concentrated situation from which the entire work of fiction develops.

6 Similar comments, concerning the fearful way the past affects the present, appear in other works. In The Marble Faun, Hawthorne writes, "A depth of thirty feet

of soil has covered up the Rome of ancient days, so that it lies like the dead corpse of a giant, decaying for centuries, with no survivor mighty enough even to bury it, ..." The Marble Faun, (Toronto: Signet, I96I), [copyright I860], p. 86.

7 Hyatt H. Waggoner, Hawthorne: A Critical Study, (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, I963), [copyright I953], pp. I62-I63.

8 Waggoner, Hawthorne: A Critical Study, pp. I7I-I72.

9 The only objects that seem to be absolute are the pictoral representations of some of the characters. The stern and proud portrait of the Colonel faithfully signifies his nature, the painting of Clifford points to his inner beauty and fragility, despite the fact that he has grown old and wrinkled, and the daguerrotype of Jaffrey reveals his evil nature, where an examination of him in person would not. Thus Hawthorne once again suggests that the artist, as represented by the daguerrotypist, is one of the few persons capable of perceiving the 'truth'. As pointed out earlier, however, in order to perceive, the artist must lead a solitary life, and that, in Hawthorne's world, comes at a great price. Therefore when Holgrave relinquishes his solitary existence to marry Phoebe, he must also renounce his 'wild' ideas concerning the manner in which houses shape mankind.

I0 A. H. Roper, in his article "The Moral and Metaphorical Meaning of The Spoils of Poynton", disregards this third set of images. He is convinced that Fleda's idealism is healthy and correct. Hence, "Her alternative, to take Owen from Mona by allowing her love full expression, would have represented a descent to the petty level of self-interest and expediency on which Mrs. Gereth and the Brigstocks move." James, however, leaves no doubt in the reader's mind that any sort of love between Owen and Mona has faded well before his proposal to Fleda, and thus the only thing that keeps Fleda and Owen apart is Fleda's twisted priorities.
"The Moral and Metaphorical Meaning of The Spoils of Poynton", American Literature, 32 (I960-6I), pp. I95-I96.

II Robert C. McLean, in "The Subjective Adventure of Fleda Vetch", perplexingly assigns a great deal of intelligence and craftiness to the character of Owen. The second part of the article deals with his interpretation that Owen is, in fact, manipulating Fleda in order to "dupe" Mrs. Gereth and secure the treasures of Poynton. Such a reading neglects the fact that Owen could, at any time, take for himself all the "things". Furthermore,

this interpretation fails to take into account James's general characterization of Owen. "He had neither wit nor tact, nor inspiration: ...." (3I).
"The Subjective Adventure of Fleda Vetch", American Literature, 36 (I964-65), pp. I2-30.

I2 Nina Baym, in her article entitled "Fleda Vetch and the Plot of The Spoils of Poynton", argues that the character of both Mrs. Gereth and Fleda underwent many changes during the creation of the novel. She closely examines all the notebooks and writes, "Introduced as a simple plotting device, Fleda's increasing complexity provides coherence in a far more complicated story than James had planned to write." Following this theory then, Mrs. Gereth, who started out as the major character, is simply pushed into the background as the story progresses. "Fleda Vetch and the Plot of The Spoils of Poynton", P. M. L. A., 84 (I969), p. I02.

I3 Nina Baym offers a slightly different interpretation. "It seems as though Fleda can love only in fantasy, and the love object must therefore be safely beyond the bounds of the attainable."
"Fleda Vetch and the Plot of The Spoils of Poynton", p. I08.

CONCLUSION

In The House of the Seven Gables, Hawthorne employed the structural device of the house to examine and locate a suitable way for his characters to live and survive within the often crushing framework of time. For this reason, characters often assumed a number of different and antagonistic points of view which represented various ways of 'living'. Unity and restoration occurred when the original sin was obliterated, thus illustrating the power and manner of cyclical time. For Hawthorne, the dilemma of the Pyncheons in isolation from mankind is of great concern. As an artist, he is forever exploring in his fiction his place, or lack of one, within the "sympathetic chain of humanity". James, on the other hand, does not appear to be greatly concerned, on a personal level, with these concepts of 'time' and 'home'. Forever confident about the place of his art, James concentrates on fully developed plots and characters. His emphasis on the novel form contrasts with Hawthorne's often allegorical romances.

Nevertheless, a factor which unites the fiction of Hawthorne and James -- and makes their houses similar in the works under discussion -- is their interest in isolation as an artistic situation (along these lines, it will be remembered that Buitenhuis related that Hawthorne and James were often

drawn to the study of the "sordid" aspects of life). Isolation, either in Colonel Pyncheon's original crime against Maule which severed his house from humanity or in Mrs. Gereth's rift with her son and in Fleda's withdrawal into the exclusiveness of Poynton and its objects, provides the "germ" for these works. In order to examine the effects of isolation it must be seen in relation to other points of view. For this reason, James compares and contrasts the houses of Waterbath and Poynton and their ways of life as represented by their owners. Hawthorne, with Jaffrey's mansion, Colonel Pyncheon's house and Hepzibah's home, has done exactly the same thing. In The Spoils of Poynton, moreover, a third house is set in direct opposition to both Waterbath and Poynton, and we may assume that through the representation of Ricks, James, like Hawthorne, is attempting to define a successful means of habitation.

Mrs. Gereth's first appraisal of Ricks produces predictable comments. The doors are "like the holes of rabbit-hutches" and she wonders, "how a place in the deepest depths of Essex and three miles from a small station could contrive to look so suburban" (40). Unlike her criticism of Waterbath, however, Mrs. Gereth's statements concerning Ricks may not be laughingly endorsed. Fleda senses that there is a "faded and melancholy" grace in the house -- the effect of a maiden aunt who previously inhabited it -- and although Fleda's overly indulgent fancy leads her

to the 'hopeful' opinion that the aged spinster "had deeply suffered", the atmosphere of the house contains a warmth and humanity that is not found in Poynton. Thus, when the spoils are shipped to Ricks, James, through the sensitive eyes of Fleda, is quick to point out the incongruity of such a habitation. Scattered around Ricks, the Poynton furniture was "too much like a minuet danced on a hearth-rug" (54). Mrs. Gereth's act, therefore, disturbs not only the aesthetic 'beauty' of Poynton, but much more importantly, destroys the warm atmosphere of Ricks. "The maiden aunt had been exterminated -- no trace of her to tell her tale" (57). It is almost as if Mrs. Gereth, by committing her selfish act, is responsible for a murder. Obviously, Mrs. Gereth's ruination of the aged spinster is directly comparable to Colonel Pyncheon's destruction of Maule, Maule's destruction of Alice and Jaffrey's abortive attempt to destroy Clifford. Greed and 'pride' lie behind each action.

In the second last chapter, Fleda and Mrs. Gereth discuss the recent restoration of Ricks, and through their words and the happy tone of their discussion we cannot help comparing the favourable reappearance of the maiden aunt's furniture with the restoration of "the great chorus of Poynton". It is through the absence of the worshipped "things" that the quiet and calm atmosphere of Ricks returns. The spoils have been gathered by the overwhelming "love" of Mrs. Gereth, and hence they are scarred by the rabid

obsession of the dedicated collector. On the other hand, the maiden aunt's furniture is indicative of non-obsessive arrangement, of "practical patience" (41).

In a passage that is reminiscent of The House of the Seven Gables, Fleda explains to Mrs. Gereth why she feels favourably towards Ricks.

> 'It's a presence, a perfume, a touch. It's a soul, a story, a life. There's ever so much more here than you and I. We're in fact just three!'
> 'Oh, if you count the ghosts!'
> 'Of course I count the ghosts. It seems to me ghosts count double -- for what they were and for what they are. Somehow there were no ghosts at Poynton,' Fleda went on. 'That was the only fault' (180).

Here is the "fault" of Poynton. Like the newly built house of the seven gables and the mansion of Jaffrey Pyncheon, Poynton is all calculated glitter. There is no atmosphere of life in Poynton, no comfortable past, save for the adopted artificiality of the many ponderous antiques. The similarity between the cold and inhospitable representations of the past in these works is, therefore, striking. Hepzibah's affection for her gloomy corridors and ancestral antiquities is commensurate with the glittering halls and valuable collection of Mrs. Gereth. It is the pride of Colonel Pyncheon and Jaffrey which constructs their houses, which severs them from mankind. Similarly, it is the pride of Mrs. Gereth which infects Poynton, and also infects the dangerously innocent mind of Fleda, for Fleda's desire to become part of her imagined aesthetic religion is a proud

and destructive ambition. Thus in both The House of the Seven Gables and The Spoils of Poynton, the manner in which egotism affects one's way of living is a primary consideration. It crushes life from both houses, making them isolated temples or cathedrals, not homes.

The houses act as structural centres around which the "cluster of appurtenances" are examined. In both works, houses are compared to other houses, characters are compared and contrasted, and houses and characters are viewed in relation to each other. James and Hawthorne are forever studying these relationships. Both authors, therefore, are concerned with what Eliot has termed the "situation". Phoebe's meetings with Jaffrey on the threshold of the house and with Holgrave in the garden, Hepzibah's relationship to her house in Chapter Two, Mrs. Brigstock 'catching' Owen and Fleda in the parlour, Mrs. Gereth's first conversation with Fleda and Fleda's dream-like vision of returning to Poynton, -- these are but a few of the "situations" in The House of the Seven Gables and The Spoils of Poynton. In these "situations", moreover, Hawthorne and James are constantly slowing down the action, permitting the reader to carefully view each important pose and action and analyze it from each angle. In many cases, the relative position of the characters and houses is conveyed to the reader as an almost visual scene. In both works, the numerous relationships and interconnections should make us

aware that first and foremost the authors are concerned with methods of 'composition', with developing the "germ" as fully as possible.

Thus in The House of the Seven Gables and The Spoils of Poynton, Hawthorne and James signify their artistic concepts. They indicate their belief that artistic 'truth' is not to be found in exclusively expostulating ideas, but in amplifying "situations" and comparing relationships. At this point, the theories of Beach concerning the similarities between James's fiction and a 'picture' should be recalled. Hawthorne's work, as we have seen, with its emphasis upon "atmosphere" and the "picturesque", deserves the same consideration. If one employs a still life painting as an example of a 'picture', it will be seen that the importance of the work lies in the relationships amongst the colours, shades and shapes of all the objects. Surely, the relationships grouped around the houses and characters in The Spoils of Poynton and The House of the Seven Gables create a similar, overall effect. Like the painting, appearances are explored by observing affiliations. It will be remembered that one reason offered for Fleda's twisted attraction to Poynton was that "her opportunities for comparison had been small" (19). In the works under discussion, Hawthorne and James developed their "situations" in order to give us the opportunities for comparison. These works illustrate that everything is dependant upon the full range of relationships.

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