

Gothic Elements in Nathaniel Hawthorn's The House of the Seven Gables

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Abstract

Nathaniel Hawthorne's The House of Seven Gables is a novel. It explores the decay of morals, the desire for money, and evil in society, these themes are used through gothic elements in the novel. The major theme of the story is the sins of one generation. To support the theme, the author explores aggrandizement, mystery, uncertainty, horror, and dread. Hawthorne uses the theme of gothic and incorporates supernatural elements. These effective elements focus on the human spirit, where fear and horror reside within the human mind.

Keywords: Gothic, Mystery, Supernatural, Horror

The Gothic novel was popular in England from the 1760s to 1830 and falls under the category of Romantic Literature. The Gothic Novels were influenced by the whole of European literature and its tradition. The literary interest in Elizabethan Drama and Jacobean Drama as well as the fiction of sensibility developed by the Gothic elements. Gothic novels can be described as literature that is used to petrify people by explaining the situations that blur the boundary between reality and Imagine. The reason for Gothic literature is to petrify people.

The House of the Seven Gables was published in 1851. The novel is set in mid-19th century Salem. The story highly depicts features of romance, but it is also connected with elements of Gothic and horror. The novel encompasses the mysterious death of Colonel Pyncheon, Judge Pyncheon, summoning of spirits, and the mysterious curse-ridden antique house of the Seven Gables.

Hawthorne uses horror in The House of the Seven Gables, giving it a gothic tone. Moreover, he handles them in a different way. The first chapter contains many terror and horror scenes. Colonel Pyncheon took the land of Matthew Maule forcefully and built a mansion on it. He arranged a ceremony for the new building. When the ceremony is about to start, the lieutenant governor didn't see his master, Colonel Pyncheon. The lieutenant saw the door as pointed out by the servant. He knocked on the door, but no one responded. However, he knocked again, and still no one came. The lieutenant took his sword and banged on the door. He saw Colonel Pyncheon's dead body. When the sound subsided, the silence throughout the house was deep and dreadful. The whole scene was conceived in the grotesqueness of gothic fancy. When the lieutenant entered the

room, it was furnished in a moderate size, with some darkened curtains hanging, books arranged on shelves, a large map hanging on the wall, likewise a portrait of Colonel Pyncheon, beneath which sat the real Colonel Pyncheon himself in an oaken elbow chair, with a pen in his hand. Additionally, letters, parchments, and blank sheets of paper were on the table before him. The lieutenant frowned. This scene clearly heightened the feeling of horror faced by the lieutenant. Another fearful incident that frequently appeared was the dead shopkeeper in the shop. The shop was locked immediately upon his death, but the ghost of the shopkeeper frequently appeared in the shop.

“ The old counters, shelves, and other fixtures of the little shop remained just as he had left them.

It used to be affirmed that the dead shopkeeper”

(THSG 26)

Another incident of gothic occurs when Hepzibah sees the ghost of Pyncheon at noon. She first picks up a half-finished stocking and starts knitting nervously and jerkily, but suddenly finds herself struggling with the stitches. She throws it away and walks hurriedly around the room. She becomes agitated when the ghost of Pyncheon asks, ‘Well, what do you have to say? Is not the Pyncheon house my own while I’m alive?’ These are some gothic traits in this novel. Evil is also a major cause to be analysed here. Money is the key factor in all the destruction in The House of the Seven Gables.

The House of the Seven Gables is one of the greatest American novels. It explores many evils in the real society of that period and reflects sins, the desire for money which destroys everything in the novel. The House of the Seven Gables is also like a crime story with a series of mysteries and suspense. The novel handles the motif of the evil of property.

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