SOME MAJOR ELEMENTS OF ANALYZING FICTION

A Survey Report of Nathaniel Hawthorne's
"My Kinsman, Major Molineux"

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Preface

Generally people like to spend a part or even the most parts of their leisure time reading a short story or a novel as their favorite recreation, for they can temporarily enjoy themselves by mixing with those imaginary characters in the fictitious world. After reading a good story, we usually have a certain kind of feelings in our mind — satisfied with what has happened in the story, sorry about the great disaster the character encounters, smiling or even crying unconsciously along with the spread of the lucky or unlucky affairs. A literary work is a kind of reflection of human life, through which we can see how life functions. "In our daily experiences we are lost in largeness of all around us. We cannot understand all that is going on. But a good book catches a part of what is going on and holds it for us, and we can see relationships there, and causes and effects which escape us in the flying by a actual time and events."¹

Besides the enjoyment of general story-reading, however, a student of literature has to understand something deeper about the basic function of the special literary form, Fiction, that combines structural arrangement of daily affairs, logical actions of proper characters, and technically story-telling ability with literary artistry and rhetorical skill. He must, therefore, always bear in mind that the readings he usually meets at college present a challenge of unusual magnitude, and he has to get into the story by analyzing its major elements in order to the full understanding of the literary work as a unified artistic work.

To simplify the procedures of literary analysis and reduce the artificial drudgery, I have decided to approach the problems of developing a reader's understanding and

¹. Pearl S. Buck, Literature And Life (Selected English Readings, NTNU, 1960) p. 57.
appreciation of fiction by providing an example of analyzing a short story which, I hope, will enable him to gain greater enjoyment as well as deeper understanding, and, above all, to build up the habit of analyzing a piece of literary work on his own.

Some of the Major Elements of Analyzing a Short Story

The elements listed below (which may be listed as many as more than twenty in number) are intended to suggest only some of the most basic ones for those who begin to learn the procedures of analyzing a story as to give a complete review of the technique. In the way of analysis, one should become aware of avoiding an application so literal as to deaden the interest in the story itself. If a written report is attempted, these elements should be used as topics for passages or paragraphs, not mere question-and-answer responses like a court cross-examination. The whole report when complete should be in the form of a paper such as one would be willing to present as a part of program in a literary club or symposium.

At this point, we will look briefly at some of the more important elements of fiction as character, action, conflict, setting, point of view, theme and ideas, symbolism, and so forth, for these represent the extremely useful literary concepts, and indicate their relevance to such traditional critical factors.

1. Character

Of all the factors which critics use in analyzing stories, character is the most familiar one. What we call "character" is an imaginative construction based on the words and the forms which the author has put together; therefore, we must be careful not to let "character" take us in too much and be aware of the fact that the character in the story you are studying is only a fictitious person. In discussing the characters, we may make a list of them — which is the principal character, the protagonist; those of secondary importance, the supporting roles or deuteragonists; and those used merely as background or foil, if there are any such. Which of them have distinct individuality? Are any merely personified types of some quality or passion, such as greed, jealousy, hate, etc.? And are there any merely impersonal figures?
2. Action

The action of a story is what happens in it, or even what seems possible to happen; for, in creative works, actions are logically developed imaginary plots, just as the characters who cause or are affected by them are virtual people. In a story a number of actions on different occasions are interwoven. Sometimes the different actions parallel each other; sometimes they contrast with and thus set off each other. A tragic action is developed alongside a comic one; a noble story alongside a story of low life. The action of a story often concludes by returning us to the opening scene or situation, thus emphasizing, by inviting comparison, the changes that have occurred. The significance of a story may lie in the fact that what we expect to happen never does materialize. Or the action may conclude by completely reversing the opening situation, or the same basic plot or episode may be repeated several times. In analyzing a story, therefore, we will outline the plot to show: (a) the preliminary situation, (b) the initial incident, (c) the incidents which form the scenes or steps of the story leading up to the culmination or solution of the problem the author has set for himself, (d) the steps after culminating incident (if there are any), and (e) the conclusion.²

3. Conflict and Tension

In imaginary life, as in real life, characters in action generate conflict and tension. The fictitious plot of a story always involves a conflict or opposition of some sort. The important point to remember is that the elements in conflict need not be two persons with clenched fists, and there are often several conflicts, at once, of different types and on different levels. A classification of this kind is, of course, arbitrary but it often helps us readers to see the relationship in the development of plot of a story:

(a) Man against man — This may be the ordinary hero-villain kind of conflict, or it may occur in much more subtle forms.

(b) Man against the supernatural — Especially in myth, a man may be opposed by mortal enemies or even gods or goddess. The supernatural can also take the shape of an impersonal force such as fate or destiny as in many tragedies.

(c) Man against nature — Man tries to conquer nature ever since the beginning of the world. Man often shows an intense conflict with the natural hostile forces like: the sea, the desert, etc., especially shown in the science fiction.

(d) **Man against society** — The hero may be fighting his social environment, and he may openly struggle between the individual and the political group, racial hostility, or cultural conditions.

(e) **Man against himself** — Here the conflict is going inside the mind of the character, internal tension.

(f) **Two worlds in opposition** — This conflict is emphatically on opposing sets of ideas, values, or cultures.3

These conflicts do not necessarily occur individually, but usually appear with one or the others. Whenever the emotional tension increases, however, the story usually moves to the culmination rapidly.

4. **Setting**

The term *setting* generally refers to, or more specifically points out the *time* and *space* at which the events of a story occur. In other words, when and where does the story happen? So, the geographical location, the individual occupation, the historical background, the moral and social environment, and all the necessary information concerning the events of the story are all covered in the setting of a story.

Setting may be briefly classified as *physical setting*, which consists of natural environment and artificial scenery, and *spiritual setting*. The natural setting as the weather, season, and the rural surroundings, and the artificial scenery as cars, buildings, and social surroundings, are all often used to help evoke the mood or atmosphere of a virtual world, for the physical setting often influences an individual so much as to affect his mind and action. The spiritual setting, therefore, indicates the values embodied in or implied by the physical settings. For instance, the term as “the Highlands” (Scotland) or “New York City”, or a “shepherd”, or a “cityman”, may apparently give an entirely different idea to judge the character’s value with a spiritual as well as geographical significance.

When the author has no real interest in giving information about the physical or spiritual setting in his creative work, we may speak of the setting of the story as “neutral”. Few settings are merely physical or spiritual. For the modern reader, a rural setting would no more suggest just grass, cows, and barns, than an urban setting would indicates only subways, departments, and banks. In short, the setting of a work is the sum total of references to the physical objects and artifacts.

5. Point of View

In writing fiction, the story teller has to choose the events essential to convey his idea, arrange the plots in a proper order, and also decide whether he will tell the story in the first person: I or we, or in the third person: he, she or they. This aspect of narrative writing is called point of view. In other words, point of view has to do with who tells the story and from what vantage point. It is a technical critical term and should not be confused with the more general idea of philosophical or intellectual position.

To determine the point of view of a story we may first ask, “Who tells the story?” and “How much is he allowed to know?” and especially, “To what extent does the author look inside his characters and report their thoughts and feelings?” Though many variations and combinations are possible, the basic points of view are as follows:

(1) The first person point of view — The narrator of the story stands out as a character or disappears into one of the characters, who tells everything in the position of the first-person narration, since the narrator naturally uses the first personal pronoun “I” in referring to himself. The character may be either a major or minor character, protagonist or observer, I or we, but he is a participant in the story. This is the technique that Mark Twain uses in his frame story “The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County”.4

(2) The third person point of view — The story is told by the author, using the omniscient or the limited omniscient third-person point of view. By doing this, the author may be free to go wherever he wishes, to peer inside the minds and hearts of his characters at will, to tell what they are thinking or feeling, and to interpret their behavior and even comment, if he wishes, on the significance of the story he is telling. On the other hand, the author sometimes tells the story objectively but limits himself at the elbow of a specific character in the story to watch the various events go on through his own eyes and mind and knows everything about himself; but he has no knowledge of what other characters are thinking or feeling or doing. This technique is used very successfully by Washington Irving in his short story “Rip van Winkle” and William M. Thackery in his “Vanity Fair”5.

(3) The double point of view — A story may be told by the first-person narrator who does not fully understand what he is telling, an uncomprehending narrator’s restricted point of view and the author’s own more comprehensive one. The limited viewpoint is

thus midway between the first person and the third person points of view. This is the technique used in Hemingway’s “Big Two-Hearted River” and in James Joyce’s “Counterparts”.6

(4) The dramatic point of view — The author of the story, using the dramatic point of view, often restricts his writing mainly to quotations and descriptions of actions. He avoids telling the reader that his characters thought this or felt that, but instead allows the characters themselves to voice their thoughts and feelings. Moreover, he even allows certain characters to interpret the thoughts and feelings of other characters. Generally the key to the dramatic point of view is that the author presents the reader with action and speech of the characters, but he should not openly lead the reader toward any conclusion. This is the technique used in Hemingway’s “The Killers”.7

6. Theme and Ideas

The term “Theme” is used in several different ways in literary criticism. It may mean “subject” of the work, or what it is “about”. More often it refers to some central proposition, or set of ideas, which the writer presumably has in his mind and around which he will build his story. The theme of a story may be stated very briefly or at greater length. With a simple or very brief story, we may be satisfied to sum up the theme in a single sentence. With a more complex story, we may still state the theme in a single sentence, or a short paragraph (or occasionally even an essay) if it is stated adequately. A rich story will give us many and complex insights into life. In stating the theme in a sentence we must pick the central insights, the one which explains the greater number of elements in the story and relates them to each other. For the theme is what gives a good story its unity. Besides, we must never think, once we have stated the theme of the story, that the whole purpose of the story has been to yield up this abstract statement. The writer wishes to deliver it not simply to our intellects, but to our emotions, our senses, and our imaginations. Sometimes the theme of a story is explicitly stated somewhere in the story, either by the author or by one of the characters. It may be little or nothing except as it is embodied and vitalized by the story.

“Ideas, of course, have place in fiction, and any writer of fiction needs a mind. But ideas are not the best subject matter for fiction. . . . Creative writers—like other artists—are not, generally speaking, particularly intellectual. That is, they are not by nature the sort of people who care passionately about ideas, theories, intellectual abstractions of any kind. In short, their strong point is more likely to be experiential knowledge than conceptual knowledge.”

Generally every creative writer creates characters, and most characters naturally express ideas, which do appear as one element in almost all fiction. Whether the ideas are important or not, they operate as do the other elements in creative writing. The various ideas are made to parallel and contrast with each other, just as characters and actions do, and to assist in the creation of the other elements.

7. Symbolism

A literary symbol is something which means more than what it is. It is an object, a person, a situation, an action, or some other item, which has a literal meaning in the story but suggests or represents other meanings as well. A very simple illustration is to be found in name—symbolism. Most names are simply labels. In a sotry, however, the author may choose names for his characters which serve not only to label them but also to suggest something about them. In the fictional trilogy “The Forsyte Saga,” John Galsworthy (1867–1933) chooses Forsyte as the family name of his principal character to indicate their practical foresightedness.

Thus symbols may be also be either traditional or personal. When Hemingway, in “The Old Man and the Sea”, introduces the images of the Christian cross and the scarred hands (suggesting stigmata, marks representing Christ’s wounds), he is employing traditional symbols.

8. Structure

In literary studies, we may figuratively analyze the formation of a story as a structure of a building, so the structure of a literary work may be treated as its organization influenced by its plot (action) or emotions. Edgar V. Roberts indicates, “In imaginative

works, structure refers to chronological position of parts, scenes, episodes, chapters, and acts, it also refers to logical or associational relationships among stanzas, ideas, images, or other divisions.”

The structure of a creative work generally refers to the arrangement and development of ideas, or the relationships among parts that are usually described in terms of cause and effect, position in time, association of ideas, symmetry in development, and balance and proportion with the artistic technique. As Roberts points, “Literary artists universally aim at a unified impression in their works, and because literature is a time art (it cannot be comprehended as a whole in one moment, as can a painting or a work of sculpture), the study of structure attempts to demonstrate that the idea and the resulting arrangement of parts produce a total impression. You can see, therefore, that a study of structure is one avenue to the evaluation of literature, because such a study would bring out any lack of unity in a work and make that work subject to adverse criticism.”

In order to demonstrate the relationships of well-balanced parts of arrangement as well as the development of ideas of a good literary work, let us take Shakespeare's Sonnet No. 73 (quoted below) for example to study its structure by analyzing its connection links in each of the three quatrains and the concluding rhymed couplet:

Stanza I

That time of year thou must in me behold,
When yellow leaves, or none, or few do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.

In me thou seest the twilight of such day,
As after sunset fadeth in the West,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self that seals up all in rest.

Stanza II

In me thou seest the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death bed, whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourished by.

Stanza III

That time of year thou must in me behold,
When yellow leaves, or none, or few do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.

In me thou seest the twilight of such day,
As after sunset fadeth in the West,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self that seals up all in rest.

In me thou seest the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death bed, whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourished by.

12. Ibid., p. 79.
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong.
To love that well, which thou must leave ere long.13

Suppose that each part of the Sonnet must be unique as well as connected, an ideal plan of this distinctness and connection might be graphed with the use of four overlapping triangles, with the areas of overlap representing the subject matter common to the three quatrains and also to the concluding couplet. “In each quatrain the phrase “in me” appears with the phrases “thou mayest behold,” “thou seest,” and “thou seest” again. In the couplet the phrase “thou perceiv’st” and the word “that” as a pronoun referring to the speaker, so that each major unit contains references to the speaker and his listener. In addition, a common subject of the three quatrains might be various stages of light or conditions affecting light; in quatrain one, referring to late autumn, the sun would be low in the sky, just as in quatrain two the sun has set and in the third the coals retain only a dull glow. Similarly, in quatrains two and three, death is mentioned specifically, and quatrain one refers to barren branches from which dead leaves have fallen. All three quatrains either imply or refer to something that has passed, namely summer(I), daylight (II), and a bright fire (III), and all these are analogous to the speaker, so that the statement “To love that well, which thou must leave ere long” in the concluding couplet is a fitting resumé of the poem. With all these connecting links supplied, the drawing may be filled in, with the list of common elements placed next to it as a “key”:

Theme: A lifetime.

Connecting links:

(1) in me; thou see st.
(2) time of low or absent light:
  autumn, twilight, dying fire; leaving.
(3) death or something dead; the speaker.
(4) things that have passed or will pass; the speaker.\(^{14}\)

In the above sketch, triangles are successfully used to show the possible arrangement of the structure and its logical connecting links of ideas; but in analyzing a literary work, you might try circles, lines, planes, squares, or some other geometric figures, if they can be used to show a clear structure of it.

Generally, narration is used to tell the structure of the literary work under study if you feel it necessary or convenient. "The important point, however, is that the study of structure is not confined exclusively to the physical placement of scenes, acts, episodes, and so on, in the work under consideration. Structure is equally concerned with the logic and unity of a work". And the patterning of emotions and the physical and lexical structure are also significant elements in literary logical and unity.15

9. Conclusion

Finally, after studying a story and analysing some of its basic elements, we will realize it is a creative writing, which employs characters highly worth knowing and shows a meaningful theme upon interesting and lively plots or action well united to the setting or background of the story. Thus we should make the last item to express our criticism and estimate of the literary value of the story. Here we may comment upon the author's skill in the way of presentation, in the use of diction to give his readers a clear picture of the characters, in the form of structure the author employs, and in finding some successive or unrelated episodes which affect the development of the plot and the style of the work. And we may also express our enjoyment and understanding about the story and make a certain comparation between this work and other stories of the author or some other writers' creative writings.

10. Analyzing a short story as an illustration

The value of any scheme for organizing the results of studying a short story in the form of a Study Report will depend upon the understanding of the story we have studied, the information we have collected about it, and the clearness with which such a scheme takes care of all the essential points of the basic elements discussed in the foregoing sections. Now let us analyze Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story— "My Kinsman, Major

Molineux.” (See the Appendix I)\textsuperscript{16} as an example of study. It will be followed by a Study Report completed partly with reference to some of the reports prepared by juniors of the Course of Fiction in the Department of English, Night Division, NTNU, Taipei.

A Report on Nathaniel Hawthorne’s “My Kinsman, Major Molineux”

I. Getting into the Story

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804–64), a well-known American novelist and short story writer, occupies an important place in American literature. Generally his works blend realism, melodrama, and the Gothic conventions; and his themes characteristically center on the mysteries of the human heart, the nature of sin, and the meaning of “darkness”. The short story, “My Kinsman, Major Molineux”, was first published in 1832 in the Boston Token. Hawthorne drew his information from Thomas Hutchinson’s” The History of the Colony of Massachusetts-Bay” (1764–67). It is collected and edited by David Thorburn in Initiation, Stories and Short Novels on Three Themes (2nd ed. Yale University, 1976). It is the sort of creative writing that most people who care about literature will read more than once, not because the story has complex plot and complicated characters but because it is vividly presented with a lot of mysterious events.

The first item to catch a reader’s eye should have been the title, “My Kinsman, Major Molineux”. It is apt to attract his attention eagerly to know what kind of close relationship is between Robin and Major Molineux, and what happens to them. The story opens with a paragraph of social and historical background, which is not only proper part of the story itself, but also a brief introduction to lead the reader to get into it.

II. Summary of the Story

After the king of Great Britain has assumed the right of appointing the colonial governors, it becomes worse day after day that the people of the colonial province take various violent actions to reject government instructions, rise a popular insurrection, and even start the revolution.

Under such a political situation about a hundred years ago, Robin, a country youth of barely eighteen, leaves his home for the little metropolis of a New England colony by a ferry boat at about nine o’clock of a moolight summer evening to seek the protection

of his kinsman, Major Molineux, who has promised the youth's father a start in life in the city.

While rambling among the wider, spacious streets of the town, Robin, penniless and ignorant of the way toward his kinsman's dwelling, tries to employ his "shrewdness"17 and the assistance of Major Molineux's fame by asking the first passenger in years he meets in front of the barbar's shop, who keeps uttering sepulchral hems, rebutes him instead of answering his inquiry, and warns him away with a threat to have him thrown into the stocks. Then Robin wanders into narrow and crooked streets to ask an inn-keeper the dwelling of Major Molineux. The inn-keeper knowingly reads from a wanted poster and tells him to move along. The seeming common question, however, causes unexpected reaction of the people who hear it; therefore, Robin finds himself astonishingly rebuffed by them. Now the bell announces the hour of nine, and Robin peers into various shop-windows until he finds himself in a mean-looking street. He approaches a half-open door, in which a woman in scarlet petticoat tells him laughingly that his kinsman lives inside. While being led in, he is kept away from crossing her doorstep by a watchman, who also refuses to offer Robin the information, and he realizes the woman's temptation and thus flees away from her at once. Continually roaming forward near the town church, Robin accosts a bulky man with a half-red and half-black face. Robin, insisting to know whereabouts of his kinsman's dwelling, and even flouring his oak cudgel, is told that his kinsman Major Molineux will pass by this very spot an hour later. The moon creates, as an imaginative power, some strangeness in familiar objects, and there are graves around the church; now an uneasy thought obtrudes into Robin's mind. Being weary in an ambiguous condition, after travelling thirty miles without sufficient food, he feels exhausted and sleepy while sitting on the steps of the church door. Unexpectedly comes by a genuinely kind gentleman, who listens to Robin's story and waits with him for his kinsman.

Around the midnight, a parade comes to Robin. Soon the shouting increases, and a torch-lit mob, led by the red-and-black-faced man, appears, with the long-sought kinsman, Major Molineux, being dragged along in an open cart in tar-and-feathery dignity. In agony, Major Molineux recognizes the youth at once, but Robin, being unable to control himself or mocking at his own stupidity, joins the laughter of the mob and becomes that of the loudest.

17. All the quotations from this page till the end of this study report are quoted from Appendix I—"My Kinsman, Major-Molineux"
After the procession finally winds out of sight, the gentleman, laying his hand on the youth's shoulder, inquires him, "Well, Robin, are you dreaming?" Robin feels started and pulls back his arm from the stone post to which he has instinctively clung, and then tells the gentleman that he wants to leave for home right away; however, the gentleman encourages him to stay in the city to live a new life, and, perhaps, to rise in the world without the help of his kinsman, Major Molineux.

III. The Characters

The title of the story is "Major Milineux", yet the whole narration is centered on Robin's adventures, both physically and mentally; therefore, he is the protagonist of the story. Major Molineux is a tragic figure and serves as a foil, but he plays a very important role who actually holds all the main points of the development of the plot, mostly hides himself in the imaginative statement, and does not appear until the end of the story. As to the rest of the characters play various parts of the colonists in Massachusetts.

1. Robin is a country boy. **Physically** he is a normal youth, at the age of barely eighteen. He visits the town in his warm three-cornered hat, grey coat, leather breeches and blue yarn stockings, leaning on an oaken cudgel, and bearing a wallet on his back. **Morally** he is simple and innocent. Being the second son of a New England clergyman, he resists the town woman's temptation. **Emotionally** he is gentle, polite, and unsophisticated. Each time he politely asks the colonists the whereabouts of his kinsman's dwelling, he seems to be proud of his uncle's official position, but being mostly warned to go away. **Mentally** he is a shrewd and self-confident youth, but sometimes he feels empty. He suffers from rebuffs by the colonists and is away from his family. Only, in the long run, he is genuinely helped by the kind gentleman and wavers between an independent life in the city or going back home right away.

Moreover, the most interesting complexity in Robin's characters is the change of his attitude. Robin comes from the countryside, armored in innocence and armed with an oak club and his native shrewdness. He believes innocently in his own shrewdness and wanders imaginarily toward a point of enlightenment for his physical well-being. When he admits that his purse is nearly empty and states his purpose to be the town, he is warned to stay away by the innkeeper. With his usual shrewdness, he considers it strange that an empty pocket should have more weight than his kinsman, Major Molineux's name. Unprepared for such ambiguities and complixities of moral world, Robin, in a dreamy state, seeing his kinsman, Major Molineux, being fragged in tar-and-feathery dignity among the mob, finally
comes to understand something of the moral complexity of the world and to accept his own complicity in the universal guilt.

2. Major Molineux is a high ranking royal officer appointed by the British court; a majestic, honorable, elderly gentleman of strong, square features, and with a head grown gray in honor. Because he is one of the Tories, he falls in the critical situation. Though he tries to please both the colonists and the British court, yet none is pleased. And, on the contrary, he suffers the cruel punishment and humiliation from his people, the colonists in the mob, and sweeps away Robin's hope for his forceful direct support, by which, however, Robin understands the moral world after all.

3. The colonists—We are not told much about the colonists except those limited and fragmental discriptions of their appearances and actions. As a matter of fact, they are only allegorical representatives of the colonists in the New England colony—Massachusetts. They seem to be rude, gloomy, insidious, and especially unfriendly to Robin when he mentions his kinsman, Major Molineux. Therefore the discussion of these characters will be much more brief by the sequence of their appearances in the story:

(1) The ferryman, being paid an extra fare, ferries Robin to get to the little metropolis of a New England colony from his home country at about nine o'clock of a moonlight evening.

(2) The old man, whom Robin meets first in the town, wears a full periwig of grey hair and a wide, dark coat, carries a long, polished cane and utters sepulchral hems. He rebukes Robin and threatens to punish him with the stocks when Robin inquires to tell him whereabouts of Major Molineux's dwelling.

(3) The barbers cast ridicule in an ill-mannered roar upon Robin when he is blamed by the old man in front of the barber's shop.

(4) The innkeeper is a cunning little snob in a stained white apron and always paying his professional welcome to customers, for he is the second generation from a French Protestant and has inherited the courtesy of his parent nation. After knowing Robin's intention, first he points and reads the reward note on the wall, and then he changes his manner immediately to drive Robin out of the inn under the sneering glance of the other guests there.

(5) The dainty little woman in scarlet petticoat cheats Robin by telling him that "Major Molineux dwells here" and she is the Major's housekeeper. As a matter of fact she is not a lady of good parentage, and she just wants to tempt Robin. Fortunately the watchman interrupts the conversation between Robin and the woman just in time.
and warns Robin to go away.

(6) The watchman, carrying a lantern, appears with a heavy yawn to stop Robin from falling into the sensual temptation of the little woman in petticoat, but he laughs at Robin in a drowsy manner when the procession of the mob appears.

(7) The mysterious person is the man with a double prominence on his forehead, a hook nose, fiery eyes, and a half-red and half-black face; and a mouth which seems to extend from ear to ear is black or red, in contrast to the color of the cheek. He is in some sense the Devil himself and also the leader of the angry mob; however, he tells Robin to wait at the church for Major Molineux’s passing by in an hour.

(8) The gentleman, whom Robin meets beside the church while he is in great loneliness, is a kind and honest man “in the prime, of open, intelligent, cheerful and altogether prepossessing countenance.” He realizes Robin’s bewilderment, relieves his loneliness by accompanying him to watch the procession, and also advises him that he may rise in the world without the help of his kinsman Major Molineux.

IV. The Action

The action of the story obviously contains all the episodes happened on Robin’s journey from his crossing the river by a ferry boat to his listening to the gentleman’s kind advice—“You may rise in the world without the help of your kinsman Major Molineux.” However, it also implies the turning points of the developing process of Robin’s mental state—from the stage of being innocent, young, and full of fantasy to that of being sophisticated, mature, and realistic; therefore, the episodes of the story may be divided into the following three sections: The first section concerns the episodes that take place at the ferry; the second, in various streets of the town; and the last, in front of the church.

(1) In the beginning of Robin’s adventures, he tries to show his shrewdness and determination to find his kinsman, Major Molineux’s protection in a strange town. Even he reluctantly promises to pay the ferryman an extra fare for initiating his trip. After landing, he walks forward into the town with proud confidence and light steps, and he even ignores the possibility to get some information from the ferryman about his kinsman.

(2) In the second section of the action, Robin walks along the streets of the town and meets with various kinds of people, yet he finds nothing from them about whereabouts of his kinsman, Major Molineux. The first figure he meets near a barber’s shop is an old aristocracy, who later authoritatively threatens Robin by saying, “Your feet shall be brought acquainted with the stocks by daylight, tomorrow morning,” Then Robin still
self-confidently searches for Major Molineux’s dwelling and goes into an inn where he is welcomed by the courteous innkeeper; however, after inquiring some information about his kinsman, Major Molineux, he is warned to go right away with “a general laugh... like the dropping of small stones into kettle”. While wandering along, he runs into a temptation from the pretty mistress in scarlet petticoat, but he is cautioned by the watchman who shows a “broad, dull face on Robin.” This event makes Robin feel falling into great confusion and loneliness. Then, he again encounters with the two-color-faced devil, who informs Robin, “Watch here an hour, and Major Molineux will pass by.” Being hungry and fatigued, Robin becomes very confused, mysterious, and doubtful about what he is doing.

(3) In the last section of the action, Robin is gloomily waiting for his kinsman at the steps of the church as if he is under a spell; he looks around the deserted church and the grave yard with dismay. The terrible scene makes him solitary and weary, and recall his family, especially his father’s missionary performance at home. When Robin’s mind is vibrating between fancy and reality. Unexpectedly a gentleman shows up. After understanding Robin’s problem, he kindly accompanies Robin there and offers him some advice. About an hour later, Robin, in a dreamy state, finds the double-faced fellow leading the mighty procession of mob moves by the church. Within the march, Robin sees his kinsman in tar-and-feathery dignity on an open cart; so he seems to be under great humiliation, disappointment, and sorrowfulness, and “to hear the voices of the barbers, of the guests of the inn, and of all who have made sport of him that night. The contagion seems to be spreading among the multitude, and it also seizes upon Robin, so he joins the crowd with the loudest voice. Finally Robin realizes that his imagination has been broken, and he starts to grow weary of a town life, so he asks the gentleman, “Will you show me the way to the ferry?” The last section of the action ends with the gentleman’s advice to Robin.

In short the first section of the action concerns the stage of preparation for Robin’s self-discovery. Through the second section of the action, Robin gradually becomes sophisticated with the traditional, social situation of the town. He even joins with the colonists in the monstrous laugh to transfer the townpeople’s ridicule of himself to the Major. He pays the fearful price of initiation into the sinful human race by acting the part of a sinner. Finally, the last section of the action illustrates that Robin’s simple innocence is lost when he gains the mental maturity, and he is to meet the challenge to make a shrewd decision for his future.
V. The Conflicts

We may find various ways of conflicts in this story. First, in the beginning of the story, we can see the picture of the *man-against-society conflict*, that is, the ruler, British Royal Court, against the ruled, colonists of the New England. In other words, the freedom fighters try every possible means to strive for their independence from the British government control.

Second, we can obviously find several episodes to show the *conflict* between *man against man*, such as innocent Robin’s being threatened by the old man to put his feet in the stocks, being sneered by the innkeeper, other guests as well as the barbers, and being cheated by the woman in scarlet petticoat and chased out of the house by the watchman.

Third, we can read this story as a picture of *man-against-himself conflict*. Robin has to establish his self-independence by giving up his original intention of obtaining assistance from his uncle.

Finally, we can also find a *man-against-supernature conflict* in the story. Because timing, opportunity, or fate fails Robin at the trip for visiting his kinsman in the city, though he has tried his best, and his uncle as well as his father has already promised to give the shrewd country boy a hand to stand up in the world. That is what the proverb says, “Man proposes, God disposes.” It is really hard for one to knew where and when he can possibly meet the so-called “good luck”. On the other hand, it is not just a bad time for Robin to have learned the lesson from the gentleman, “You may rise in the world without the help of your kinsman, Major Molineux.”

VI. The Setting

In the first paragraph of the story, Hawthorne’s remarks on the ill relationship among the colonial people, the kings of Great Britain and their appointed governors in the New England Colony in America, serves as the *social and historical setting*. From the late 17th century to about the early part of the 19th century, the colonial governors seldom met with the ready and generous approbation of the colonists. Not only they were rewarded by their people with slender gratitude, but some of them were imprisoned, driven away, or hastened to their graves.

Hawthorne spends relatively few words on the *natural setting*, yet he successfully from a kind of strange, fearful and mysterious mood by pointing that when Robin arrives at the town at about 9 o’clock in the moonlight evening. The obscure sights under the
moonlight seem to parallel and reflect Robin's personal embarrassing situation. While watching Major Molineux in an uncovered cart, Robin finds "there the torches blazed the brightest; there the moon shone out like day," and he becomes stupefied for a moment.

As to the artificial scenery of the physical setting, the author describes in detail about a single boat crosses the ferry with a single passenger at that unusual hour. As Robin walks in the town, he becomes entangled in a succession of crooked and narrow streets which cross each other. While wandering in some narrow lanes and spacious streets, he finds a weird tavern, and lots of small mean wooden houses, and few well-built buildings, and finally he reaches to the tranquil and sacred church and grave yard.

The most important setting in the story concerns Robin's mind. The spiritual setting initiates from Robin's being sent to the town and his unconquerable spirit in looking for his kinsman's dwelling regardless of having been sneered or threatened by a variety of people he meets there. And once he gets away from being cheated and tempted by a woman in scarlet petticoat because of the watchman's interruption. Then his mind keeps vibrating between fancy and reality during his wandering among the streets. He is gradually falling into a weary, sleepy and dreamy state and even is not sure where he actually is.

After seeing his uncle tarred and feathered in the unexpective tumultuous procession. He is seized for a moment by the contagion spreading among the multitude. As soon as he becomes awake to the disappointed situation, he grows weary of the town life and asks the gentleman to show his way to the ferry.

VII. The Point of View

Superficially, a reader may think "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" is told from Robin's point of view, but if he looks deeply into the story, he will find it of double point of view, for a reader can not only witness the events and characters through Robin's eyes, but understand everything from Hawthorne's vantage point. By means of the double point of view, the author manages to the reader a great deal more than Robin himself can ever understand. Robin is, by nature, an uncomprehending observer, especially, to the townpeople's attitude, for he takes it for granted that he is shrewd and his kinsman noble and expected. At the end of the story he comes to realize that he is deceived and mocked. This incapacity for self-discovery is the process that one must pay for his becoming into maturity.

Moreover, the discrepancy between Robin's view of things and Hawthorne's is a primary source of irony. We know that Major Molineux is not welcomed or expected by
the colonists based on the very first paragraph, yet Robin does not understand it at all. On the contrary, he thinks his kinsman is powerful, authoritative, and respectable. In the final scene, he becomes awake from a dreamy state, and he is affected by a sort of mental inebriety. Hawthorne strips him of his innocence and exhibits him as a mature young man.

VIII. Theme and Ideas

The theme of this story obviously shows that one's innocence will be lost when his maturity can be gained, and that one's future is often influenced by the times and circumstances that one encounters, yet one may rise in the world without the help or influence from others. One's fate is certainly managed by oneself.

It is necessary for a reader to make a study on Robin's ideas in reflecting those setbacks. Robin often has an impulse of attacking his opponents with his cudgel whenever he meets people who make sport of him. Nevertheless, he calms down after all because of his good nature and the Puritan influence of his family. Robin is shrewd and confident in getting his kinsman's help until he sees Major Molineux in tar and feather. Therefore he becomes desperate and grows weary of a town life.

Robin's actions also imply that one must have faith and courage to meet the evil challenges of the world. Robin can resist the temptation of the dainty little figure. When he comes to the church where he waits to see Major Molineux's passing by, he thinks, perhaps, this is the very house he has been seeking. When he think of his family, he sees his father leading people to pray, holding the Bible in golden light that comes from the western clouds. All these suggest Robin's firm faith and courage. So when he comes to understand the whole fact, he does not collapse, and he may try to rise in the world without the help of some influential relationship.

IX. Some Symbols

"My Kinsman, Major Molineux" combines historical, mythical, and psychological aspects with its primarily sociological treatment. When a reader reads it very carefully, he will find that the story contains several important though not especially obtrusive bits of symbolism.

One of the symbols in the story involves "the moon", by which Hawthorne implies the "darkness" because "night" may be treated as a synonym of "darkness", and "darkness" often refers to the devil in religion. Commonly evil things maybe happen at any
moment in the night. Here Hawthorne uses the moonlight to show Robin's pure, holy, religious instruction against all the evil business in the shadow, and also to imply the turning point of Robin's unknown future. And Hawthorne points, at the very beginning, that it is an "adventure, which chanced upon nine o'clock of a moonlight evening"; "a man...carried a lantern, needlessly aiding his sister luminary in the heavens;" "the guardian of midnight order;" "while the other (side of the face) was black as midnight;" "the pure snow-white of some of their complexions, the aged darkness of others;" etc. Especially, Hawthorne believes that "the moon, creating, like the imaginative power, a beautiful strangeness in familiar objects, gave something of romance to a scene that might not have possessed it in the light of day." So he describes, then, "a redder light (of torches) disturbed the moonbeams," and "wild figures in the Indian dress...were sweeping visibly through the midnight streets." Even more strangely, the author sneers Robin by writing that Robin finally sees his uncle in "an unconivered cart...there the moon shone out like day." And Robin has contagiously been seized by the wild multitude, "but Robin's shout was the loudest there..." The Man in the moon heard the far bellow. 'Oho' quoth he, 'the old earth is frolicsome tonight.'"

The second symbol concerns "the clothes", by which Hawthorne indicates the social states of his heroes in the 17th and 18th centuries (not far from a hundred years ago from Hawthorne's time). For instance, Robin wears a three-cornered hat, gray coat, leather breaches, blue yarn stockings, and bears a wallet on his back to show a gentleman coming from a nice family. When the woman in scarlet petticoat meets Robin, she says, "I could swear that was his (Major Molineux's) rainweather hat. Also he has garments very much resembling those leather small-clothes." The man in years shows one who has authority by wearing "a periwig of gray hair, a wide-skirted coat of dark cloth and silk stockings rolled above his knees." In the tavern, Robin's eyes are "attracted from them to a person who stood near the door, holding whispered conversation with a group of ill-dressed associates." Every elderly gentleman Robin meets has a gay and gallant figure, with emboidered garments of showy colors, enormous periwig, gold-laced hat, and silver-hilted swords, yet the slender-waisted woman in the scarlet petticoat proves to be a prostitute, for the scarlet color clothes symbolizes the evil attraction in the Western concept. And finally "there in tar-and-feathery dignity, sat his kinsman, Major Molineux," who is now being treated as a prisoner.

The thired symbol is Robin's "oak cudgel", which is actually used as a piece of weapon. He seems to have a sense of security while wandering about the town with it.
Whenever he encounters people who sneer or threaten him, he subconsciously tends to protect himself or even to attack them with the oak cudgel. When the innkeeper, for example, turns Robin out of the tavern, "Robin had begun to draw his hand towards the lighter end of the oak cudgel." Then, Robin thinks of an empty pocket should outweigh the name of his kinsman, Major Mclineux; "Oh, if I had one of the grinning rascals in the woods, where I and oak sapling grew up together, I would teach him that my arm is heavy though my purse be light." After a while, "he encountered a bulky stranger, . . . Robin planted himself full before him, holding the oak cudgel with both hands across his body."

The fourth, Hawthorne uses "sound" symbolically in this story, which involves various kinds of intonation and laughter Robin hears. Since the beginning, the old man speaks in "a peculiarly solemn and sepulchral intonation and "in a tone of excessive anger and annoyance," and with "sepulchral hems." Then Robin suffers very much about the bad sound such as "an ill-mannered roar of laughter from the barber's shop", "the murmur of voices" in the tavern, the innkeeper's changing his voice from the one shrill note, "a general laugh . . . like the dropping of small stones into the kettle," "Robin's voice was plaintive and winning," and he even recalls "his elder brother scorned because the beard was rough upon his lip", "a pleasant titter . . . from the open window," "a drowsy sluggish laughter," "a noise of shouting," "the stranger grinned in Robin's face", "a great broad laugh," "eager voices hailed each other," "the shouts, the laughter, and the tuneless bray." "the confusion of heavier sounds with their shrill voices of mirth or terror," "the shout and laughter of the people died away," "a voice of sluggish merriment saluted Robin's ears," "a peal of laughter like the ringing of silvery bells," and "a fit of convulsive merriment." Robin himself, however, also contagiously sends forth a shout, that is the loudest there, that is his involuntary self-mockery, and that implies his most painfull suffering of the desperation for his future. Though Robin recalls "the slightest inequality of his father's voice," yet the only nice voice Robin hears that night is the gentleman's tone of real kindness, which encourages him to be strong enough to stand up independently.

One of the most interesting symbols in this story involves "eyes and faces". As an ancient notion shows that a man's eyes are the mirror of his soul; and a face often leaves a general impression upon other's mind. At the beginning, Hawthorne introduces Robin with "brown, curly hair, well-shaped features, and bright, cheerful eyes". In the tavern, Robin is attracted by a person whose "features were separately striking almost to grotesqueness, and the whole face left a deep impression on the memory. The forehead bulged out into a
double prominence, with a vale between; the nose came boldly forth in an irregular curve, and its bridge was of more than a finger's breadth; the eyebrows were deep and shaggy, and the eyes glowed beneath them like fire in cave”; “all eyes were now turned on the country lad;” “the innkeeper turned his eyes to a written paper on the wall...with occasional recurrences to the young man's figure;” “but a strange hostility in every countenance induced him (Robin) to relinquish his purpose of breaking the courteous innkeeper's head;” “Moreover, her (of the woman in scarlet petticoat) face was oval and pretty, her hair dark beneath the little cap, and her bright eyes possessed a sly freedom, which triumphed over those of Robin” in order to show sexual attraction; “he (the watchman) turned his broad, dull face on Robin;” “he (Robin) looked up, and caught the sparkle of a saucy eye;” “the stranger... unmuffled his face, and stared full into that of Robin;” “the forehead with its double prominence, the broad hooked nose, the shaggy eyebrows, and fierce eyes, ...but thr man's complexion had... a twofold change. One side of the face blazed an intense red, while the other was black as midnight, the division line being in the broad bridge of the nose; and a mouth which seemed to extend from ear to ear was black and red, in contrast to the color of the cheek.” Robin recalls his mother's face turning “to the broad and knotted trunk” of the tree, and his younger sister's drawing down a low hanging branch before her eyes”; and just in Robin perceives “the gentleman's open, intelligent, cheerful, and altogether prepossessing countenance”. “Perhaps the bitterest pang of all was when his (Molineux's) eyes met those of Robin... They stared at each other in silence.”

Another symbol, though not touched very often yet rather important, is “The Scriptures.” There are two copies of the Bible mentioned in the story—-one is at Robin's home, and the other in the church of the town. While Robin looks inside the church, he finds “one solitary ray (of the moon) had dared to rest upon the open page of the great Bible. Had nature, in that deep hour, become a worshipper in the house which man had built?” Recalling the domestic worship, Robin sees “the good man (Robin's father, a clergyman) in the midst, holding the Scriptures in the golden light that fell from the western clouds; he beheld him close the book and all rise up to pray.” So, both of the two copies of the Bible, being illuminated by the light from heaven, suggests that Robin is facing a great contrast between the pure, holy Puritain influence symbolized by the bright moonlight, and the impure, earthly, evil force of temptation symbolized by the dim light of the lantern and the red light of the torches.

The last but not the least is “the variety of characters” that Robin encounters during
his wandering in the town, and almost each of them may metaphorically suggest a specific one of the Seven Deadly Sins—pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, and sloth. Judging from their deeds and their allegorical functions in the plot of this story, a reader may simply pigeonhole them as follows: (a) The old man intimates pride; (b) the ferryman, covetousness; (c) the woman in scarlet petticoat, lust; (d) the double-faced man, anger; (e) the innkeeper and the others at the tavern, gluttony; (f) the barbers, envy; and (g) the sleepy watchman, sloth. Above all, it is obviously that Hawthorne brings them back in the final scene being mixed up in the procession to make Robin meet the new challenge of the practical, political and social environments. And the author also puts Robin in the dilemma whether he continues to enjoy his simple, innocent, country life, or he is to risk taking pains to live in the city by being enlightened with modern knowledge.

X. The Structure

Hawthorne’s principal aim in “My Kinsman, Malor Molineux” is to show the process of Robin’s psychological change and thought transformation in trying to find some help and protection from his kinsman Major Molineux. He simply arranges the whole story into four sections (from Hawthorne’s time).

To bring out this principal aim, Hawthorne in the first section (the first three paragraphs) introduces the political, social, and historical background of this story that Robin is urged by his family to leave his countryside for the town to find his uncle at about 9 o’clock in a moonlight summer night about hundred years ago.

Then, the author uses about two-fifth of the story (from par. 4 to par. 44) to spread, step by step, the doubtful, fearful, and painful responses from those queer figures Robin encounters whenever he asks information about his kinsman, Major Molineux’s dwelling. Hawthorne shares almost an equal large portion with the second section (from par. 45 to par. 87) to form the third section of the story, in which, he moves the suspense of plot up to the climax because the double-faced man finally and clearly tells Robin, “Wait here an hour, and Major Molineux will pass by.” While waiting by the church, Robin looks inside and outside the holy place, recalls his father leading the religious mission at his countryside, and then he unexpectedly meets a nice gentleman, who accompanies Robin to watch his kinsman, Major Molineux being pulled in tar and feather on an open cart. Now Robin, feeling weary, hungry, and frustrated, is actually, in sleepy and dreamy state, and wonders between fancy and reality.

In the final section, the last three short paragraphs (par. 88 to par. 90), Hawthorne
concludes that Robin is facing the turning point of his life—to go home still to be an innocent country lad or to stay in the town to be a sophisticated youth who can rise in the world without the help of his kinsman.

As the structure of each work should be composed of all its intrinsic elements (character, action, conflict, diction, and so on) that go to make up the whole. And the basic assumption of literary structure should be a complete and symmetrical unity of artistry. If, in a work, there are nonfunctional parts, or irrelevant incidents or characters, or inappropriate language, or inconsistencies of any kind, the work is obviously demonstrating a lack of unity of artistry. In judging the value of a work or analyzing the elements of its structure, we ought not to involve individual preference in its moral, ethical, religious, or political aspects, but to be able to say objectively that, as a work of art and in purely artistic terms, it is a good (or poor) work based upon its complete and symmetrical unity.

Since “My kinsman, Major Molineux” is a story with richly complex contents, we may select its certain element or elements as the frame of structure if it is the logically dominate element of this story. Let us take, for example, the characters' respective responses to Robin's adventures in the town as the framework to combine them into a unity to a closely related structure by putting the protagonist, Robin, in the center of a circle and all the major supporting charters around him to form a complete, symmetrical unity shown as the diagram below:

The Diagram of Structure of Hawthorne's
My Kinsman, Major Molineux
Based on the Characters' Responses to Robin's Adventures

| Central idea: Robin's mental transformation from an innocent countryside boy into a mature youth of the town. |
| Connecting links: |
| (1) The metaphorical senses of the characters Robin meets in the town. |
| (2) The various events and responses to Robin's trip to the town. |
| (3) Robin's mental state in different stage. |
1. From innocence to maturity.
2. Trying to get his kinsman's help.
3. Wavering between going home or staying in the city independently.
XI. Conclusion

After completing the analysis of "My Kinsman, Major Molineux", we find that it is a story filled with moral and symbolic overtones and undertones, by which Hawthorne exhibits his preoccupation with the evil problems of British colonism. Since a creative work is a reflection of the writer's mind, we may regard Hawthorne as a person with complex characters, and some of his psychological concerns are naturally reflected in this story. The story, therefore, is a study of the historical background of rebellious events of New England colonists, the psychological transformation of Robin, the protagonist of the story, and the mythical atmosphere formed artistically by the author. Based upon these points, we will make further discussion in the following.

First, the Approach Through History

For the reader of literature, the most important aspect of a creative work is the relationship of the writing to its particular social situation such as the political developments, social condition, religious ideas and practices, and philosophical concepts of that period of time. It is obvious that any author must be a member of his society, living in a particular time and place, and inevitably affected by the condition of his life; otherwise he can not express and reflect the values around him. Then, Hawthorne tells us Robin's adventures in a town, Massachusetts, New England, "which chanced upon a summer night, not far from a hundred years ago." Here Hawthorne employs panoramic technique to present the physical setting of the story in the opening passage that takes a few seconds to inform that six governors of the province have met with misfortune in about forty years. The reader can see exactly where he is in time and space, and gets ready to trace after the follow actions. Therefore knowledge of the socio-historical picture presented by the author is essential to an understanding of what happens to Major Molineux. From the physical and spiritual settings of the story, the reader may concentrate on its dramatic development; however, he seems to be inevitably conscious that Hawthorne does purposely and artistically select, compress, and summarize such a richly complicated historical events of a rather long period of time into a single night in this short story instead of developing it into a novel.

Second, the Approach Through Psychology

Although in our daily life we know that people often behave in a strange way or do something so eccentric even beyond their own expectation, yet we always tend to see the logical development of actions of the fictional characters in literary works. In modern literary analysis, approaching fiction by examining the behavior of characters is only one
of the uses of psychology, and psychology does give us some concepts to help us understand even apparently illogical statement. Now we can understand that in a single night, Robin has been through his mental transformation from a fanciful countryside boy into a mature town youth, for Hawthorne has purposely combined all the related elements and compressed them into a single plot, much as some other literary artists show the psychological relationships of actions by the use of dialogue and symbols. With this concepts, we can also understand the elements of setting, time, and space, become meaningless categories in the realm of the unconscious—Robin, being hungry and weary, falls into the sleepy, dreamy state while he is waiting for his kinsman at the steps of the church. Therefore we now realize what seems implausible in the plot of this story can be understood in terms of the stream of subconsciousness and the dramatic expression of conflicts within a character’s mind.

Third, the Approach Through Myth

Myth is the traditional embodiment of primal and irrational rituals and also the means of re-expressing some of the deepest truths of human beings, as such, it provides a satisfying aesthetic experience below the level of conscious understanding. Hawthorne carefully and skillfully form a mythical atmosphere by depicting, step by step, the annoying, doubting, and scaring reflections of the town people asked by Robin about his kinsman’s dwelling; then the appearance of the double-faced figure who later leads the mob with torches, and Major Molineux being pulled in an open cart in tar-and-feathery dignity. The rebellious procession is, of course, a kind of English tradition ritual, by which the colonists treat Major Molineux as one of the scapegoats of the British government although he is an elderly, majestic person with strong body and steady soul. To emphasize the intensely mysterious state of mind, Hawthorne describes the strange double-faced fellow, “one side of the face blazed an intense red, while the other was black as midnight. . .the broad bridge of the nose, and a mouth extends from ear to ear. . .as if two individual devils.” Besides, with intensive attention, the author repeatedly uses the terms like “in a dream”, “little sleep”, “sleeping echoes”, “sleep-inspiring sound”, “drowsy influence”, “spectre”, etc. in order to make the reader feel “vibrating between fancy and reality” as Robin does. Even before the gentleman asks Robin, “Well, Robin, are you dreaming?” Robin has already doubtfully inquired himself, “Am I sleeping?” Now we can see what horror we eventually feel about this story derives in part from the author’s tone of voice; there is an ironic and powerful shock effect between the events themselves and the way in which they are recounted.
Above all, "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" is a story with rich, complex contents, and vivid portrayal of details, and indeed appreciated as one of Hawthorne's masterpieces. The story is bound to attract readers of literature on account of its well-wrought atmosphere and plot, and it will surely satisfy those who intend to examine it because of its multiple meanings and built-in structure. Especially at the end of this story, Hawthorne, with a few touches, successfully complete the process of Robin's mental transformation and shows the theme as a commonly essential truth to almost every youth in the world. A reading of this story will reveal how carefully Hawthorne has prepared his readers for it. Although the conclusion of this story indicates that the world is, in one sense, too rigid or too eccentric to the youth, yet it is also coldly logical.
Selected Bibliography

Appendix 1.

My Kinsman, Major Molineux

Nathaniel Hawthorne

1. After the kings of Great Britain had assumed the right of appointing the colonial governors, the measures of the latter seldom met with the ready and generous approbation which had been paid to those of their predecessors, under the original charters. The people looked with most jealous scrutiny to the exercise of power which did not emanate from themselves, and they usually rewarded their rulers with slender gratitude for the compliances by which, in softening their instructions from beyond the sea, they had incurred the reprehension of those who gave them. The annals of Massachusetts Bay will inform us, that of six governors in the space of about forty years from the surrender of the old charter, under James II, two were imprisoned by a popular insurrection; a third, as Hutchinson inclines to believe, was driven from the province by the whizzing of a musket ball; a fourth, in the opinion of the same historian, was hastened to his grave by continual bickerings with the House of Representatives; and the remaining two, as well as their successors, till the revolution, were favored with few and brief intervals of peaceful sway. The inferior members of the court party, in times of high political excitement, led scarcely a more desirable life. These remarks may serve as a preface to the following adventures, which chanced upon a summer night, not far from a hundred years ago. The reader, in order to avoid a long and dry detail of colonial affairs, is requested to dispense with an account of the train of circumstances that had caused much temporary inflammation of the popular mind.

2. It was near nine o’clock of a moonlight evening, when a boat crossed the ferry with a single passenger, who had obtained his conveyance at that unusual hour by the promise of an extra fare. While he stood on the landing place, searching in either pocket for the means of fulfilling his agreement, the ferryman lifted a lantern, by the aid of which, and the newly risen moon, he took a very accurate survey of the stranger’s figure. He was a youth of barely eighteen years, evidently country-bred, and now, as it should seem, upon his first visit to town. He was clad in a coarse gray coat, well worn, but in excellent repair; his
under garments were durably constructed of leather, and fitted tight to a pair of serviceable and well-shaped limbs; his stockings of blue yarn were the incontrovertible work of a mother or a sister; and on his head was a three-cornered hat, which in its better days had perhaps sheltered the graver brow of the lad's father. Under his left arm was a heavy cudgel formed of an oak sapling, and retaining a part of the hardened root; and his equipment was completed by a wallet, not so abundantly stocked as to incommodate the vigorous shoulders on which it hung. Brown, curly hair, well-shaped features, and bright, cheerful eyes were nature's gifts, and worth all that art could have done for his adornment.

3. The youth, one of whose names was Robin, finally drew from his pocket the half of a little province bill of five shillings, which, in the depreciation in that sort of currency, did but satisfy the ferryman's demand, with the surplus of a sexangular piece of parchment, valued at three pence. He then walked forward into the town, with as light a step as if his day's journey had not already exceeded thirty miles, and with as eager an eye as if he were entering London city, instead of the little metropolis of a New England colony. Before Robin had proceeded far, however, it occurred to him that he knew not whither to direct his steps; so he paused, and looked up and down the narrow street, scrutinizing the small and mean wooden buildings that were scattered on either side.

4. "This low hovel cannot be my kinsman's dwelling," thought he, "nor yonder old house, where the moonlight enters at the broken casement; and truly I see none hereabouts that might be worthy of him. It would have been wise to inquire my way of the ferryman, and doubtless he would have gone with me, and earned a shilling from the Major for his pains. But the next man I meet will do as well."

5. He resumed his walk, and was glad to perceive that the street now became wider, and the houses more respectable in their appearance. He soon discerned a figure moving on moderately in advance, and hastened his steps to overtake it. As Robin drew nigh, he saw that the passenger was a man in years, with a full perwig of gray hair, a wide-skirted coat of dark cloth, and silk stockings rolled above his knees. He carried a long and polished cane, which he struck down perpendicularly before him at every step; and at regular intervals he uttered two successive hems, of a peculiarly solemn and sepulchral intonation. Having made these observations, Robin laid hold of the skirt of the old man's coat, just when the light from the open door and windows of a barber's shop fell upon both their figures.

6. "Good evening to you, honored sir," said he, making a low bow, and still retaining his hold of the skirt. "I pray you tell me whereabouts is the dwelling of my kinsman, Major Molineux."
7. The youth's question was uttered very loudly; and one of the barbers, whose razor was descending on a well-soaped chin, and another, who was dressing a Ramillies wig, left their occupations, and came to the door. The citizen, in the meantime, turned a long-favored countenance upon Robin, and answered him in a tone of excessive anger and annoyance. His two sepulchral hems, however, broke into the very center of his rebuke, with most singular effect, like a thought of the cold grave obtruding among wrathful passions.

8. "Let go my garment, fellow! I tell you, I know not the man you speak of. What! I have authority, I have—hem, hem—authority; and if this be the respect you show for your betters, your feet shall be brought acquainted with the stocks by daylight, tomorrow morning!"

9. Robin released the old man's skirt, and hastened away, pursued by an ill-mannered roar of laughter from the barber's shop. He was at first considerably surprised by the result of his question, but, being a shrewd youth, soon thought himself able to account for the mystery.

10. "This is some country representative," was his conclusion, "who has never seen the inside of my kinsman's door, and locks the breeding to answer a stranger civilly. The man is old, or verily—I might be tempted to turn back and smite him on the nose. Ah, Robin, Robin! even the barber's boys laugh at you for choosing such a guide! You will be wiser in time, friend Robin."

11. He now became entangled in a succession of crooked and narrow streets, which crossed each other, and meandered at no great distance from the waterside. The smell of tar was obvious to his nostrils, the masts of vessels pierced the moonlight above the tops of the buildings, and the numerous signs, which Robin paused to read, informed him that he was near the center of business. But the streets were empty, the shops were closed, and lights were visible only in the second stories of a few dwelling houses. At length, on the corner of a narrow lane, through which he was passing, he beheld the broad countenance of a British hero swinging before the door of an inn, whence proceeded the voices of many guests. The casement of one of the lower windows was thrown back, and a very thin curtain permitted Robin to distinguish a party at supper, round a well-furnished table. The fragrance of the good cheer steamed forth into the outer air, and the youth could not fail to recollect that the last remnant of his traveling stock of provision had yielded to his morning appetite, and that noon had found and left him dinnerless.

12. "Oh, that a parchment three-penny might give me a right to sit down at yonder
table!” said Robin, with a sigh. “But the Major will make me welcome to the best of his victuals; so I will even step boldly in, and inquire my way to his dwelling.”

13. He entered the tavern, and was guided by the murmur of voices and the fumes of tobacco to the public room. It was a long and low apartment, with oaken walls, grown dark in the continual smoke, and a floor which was thickly sanded, but of no immaculate purity. A number of persons—the larger part of whom appeared to be mariners, or in some way connected with the sea—occupied the wooden benches, or leather-bottomed chairs, conversing on various matters, and occasionally lending their attention to some topic of general interest. Three or four little groups were draining as many bowls of punch, which the West India trade had long since made a familiar drink in the colony. Others, who had the appearance of men who lived by regular and laborious handicraft, preferred the insulated bliss of an unshared potation, and became more taciturn under its influence. Nearly all, in short, evinced a predilection for the Good Creature in some of its various shapes, for this is a vice to which, as Fast Day sermons of a hundred years ago will testify, we have a long hereditary claim. The only guests to whom Robin’s sympathies inclined him were two or three sheepish countrymen, who were using the inn somewhat after the fashion of a Turkish caravansary; they had gotten themselves into the darkest corner of the room, and heedless of the Nicotian atmosphere, were supping on the bread of their own ovens, and the bacon cured in their own chimney smoke. But though Robin felt a sort of brotherhood with these strangers, his eyes were attracted from them to a person who stood near the door, holding whispered conversation with a group of ill-dressed associates. His features were separately striking almost to grotesqueness, and the whole face left a deep impression on the memory. The forehead bulged out into a double prominence, with a vale between; the nose came boldly forth in an irregular curve, and its bridge was of more than a finger’s breadth; the eyebrows were deep and shaggy, and the eyes glowed beneath them like fire in a cave.

14. While Robin deliberated of whom to inquire respecting his kinsman’s dwelling, he was accosted by the innkeeper, a little man in a stained white apron, who had come to pay his professional welcome to the stranger. Being in a second generation from a French Protestant, he seemed to have inherited the courtesy of his parent nation; but no variety of circumstances was ever known to change his voice from the one shrill note in which he now addressed Robin.

15. “From the country, I presume, sir?” said he, with a profound bow. “Beg leave to congratulate you on your arrival, and trust you intend a long stay with us. Fince town
here, sir, beautiful buildings, and much that may interest a stranger. May I hope for the honor of your commands in respect to supper?"

16. "The man sees a family likeness! The rogue has guessed that I am related to the Major!" thought Robin, who had hitherto experienced little superfluous civility.

17. All eyes were now turned on the country lad, standing at the door, in his worn three-cornered hat, gray coat, leather breeches, and blue yarn stockings, leaning on an oaken cudgel, and bearing a wallet on his back.

18. Robin replied to the courteous innkeeper, with such an assumption of confidence as befitted the Major's relative. "My honest friend," he said "I shall make it a point to patronize your house on some occasion, when"—here he could not help lowering his voice—"when, I may have more than a parchment three-pence in my pocket. My present business," continued he, speaking with lofty confidence, "is merely to inquire my way to the dwelling of my kinsman, Major Molineux."

19. There was a sudden and general movement in the room, which Robin interpreted as expressing the eagerness of each individual to become his guide. But the innkeeper turned his eyes to a written paper on the wall, which he read, or seemed to read, with occasional recurrences to the young man's figure.

20. "What have we here?" said he, breaking his speech into little dry fragments. "'Let the house of the subscriber, bounden servant, Hezekiah Mudge,—had on, when he went away, gray coat, leather breeches, master's third best hat. One pound currency reward to whosoever shall lodge him in any jail of the providence.' Better trudge, boy; better trudge!"

21. Robin had begun to draw his hand towards the lighter end of the oak cudgel, but a strange hostility in every countenance induced him to relinquish his purpose of breaking the courteous innkeeper's head. As he turned to leave the room, he encountered a sneering glance from the bold-featured personage whom he had before noticed; and no sooner was he beyond the door, than he heard a general laugh, in which the innkeeper's voice might be distinguished, like the dropping of small stones into a kettle.

22. "Now, is it not strange," thought Robin, with his usual shrewdness,—"is it not strange that the confession of an empty pocket should outweigh the name of my kinsman, Major Molineux? Oh, if I had one of those grinning rascals in the woods, where I and my oak sapling grew up together, I would teach him that my arm is heavy though my purse be light!"

23. On turning the corner of the narrow lane, Robin found himself in a spacious street,
with an unbroken line of lofty houses on each side, and a steepled building at the upper end, whence the ringing of a bell announced to the hour of nine. The light of the moon, and the lamps from the numerous shop windows, discovered people promenading on the pavement, and amongst them Robin had hoped to recognize his hitherto inscrutable relative. The result of his former inquiries made him unwilling to hazard another, in a scene of such publicity, and he determined to walk slowly and silently up the street, thrusting his face close to that of every elderly gentleman, in search of the Major’s lineaments. In his progress, Robin encountered many gay and gallant figures. Embroidered garments of showy colors, enormous periwigs, gold-laced hats, and silver-hilted swords glided past him and dazzled his optics. Traveled youths, imitators of the European fine gentlemen of the period, trod jauntily along, half dancing to the fashionable tunes which they hummed, and making poor Robin ashamed of his quiet and natural gait. At length, after many pauses to examine the gorgeous display of goods in the shop windows, and after suffering some rebukes for the impertinence of his scrutiny into people’s faces, the Major’s kinsman found himself near the steepled building, still unsuccessful in his search. As yet, however, he had seen only one side of the thronged street; so Robin crossed, and continued the same sort of inquisition down the opposite pavement, with stronger hopes than the philosopher seeking an honest man, but with no better fortune. He had arrived about midway towards the lower end, from which his course began, when he overheard the approach of someone who struck down a cane on the flagstones at every step, uttering at regular intervals, two sepulchral hems.

24. “Mercy on us!” quoth Robin, recognizing the sound.

25. Turning a corner, which chanced to be close at his right hand, he hastened to pursue his researches in some other part of the town. His patience now was wearing low, and he seemed to feel more fatigue from his rambles since he crossed the ferry, than from his journey of several days on the other side. Hunger also pleaded loudly within him, and Robin began to balance the propriety of demanding, violently, and with lifted cudgel, the necessary guidance from the first solitary passenger whom he should meet. While a resolution to this effect was gaining strength, he entered a street of mean appearance, on either side of which a row of ill-built houses was straggling towards the harbor. The moonlight fell upon no passenger along the whole extent, but in the third domicile which Robin passed there was a half-opened door, and his keen glance detected a woman’s garment within.

26. “My luck may be better here,” said he to himself.
27. Accordingly, he approached the door, and beheld it shut closer as he did so; yet an open space remained, sufficing for the fair occupant to observe the stranger, without a corresponding display on her part. All that Robin could discern was a strip of scarlet petticoat, and the occasional sparkle of an eye, as if the moonbeams were trembling on some bright thing.

28. "Pretty mistress," for I may call her so with a good conscience, thought the shrewd youth, since I know nothing to the contrary,—"my sweet pretty mistress, will you be kind enough to tell me whereabouts I must seek the dwelling of my kinsman, Major Molinuex?"

29. Robin's voice was plaintive and winning, and the female, seeing nothing to be shunned in the handsome country youth, thrust open the door, and came forth into the moonlight. She was a dainty little figure, with a white neck, round arms, and a slender waist, at the extremity of which her scarlet petticoat jutted out over a hoop, as if she were standing in a balloon. Moreover, her face was oval and pretty, her hair dark beneath the little cap, and her bright eyes possessed a sly freedom, which triumphed over those of Robin.

30. "Major Molineux dwells here," said this fair woman.

31. Now, her voice was the sweetest Robin had heard that night, yet he could not help doubting whether that sweet voice spoke Gospel truth. He looked up and down the mean street, and then surveyed the house before which they stood. It was a small, dark edifice of two stories, the second of which projected over the lower floor, and the front apartment had the aspect of a shop for petty commodities.

32. "Now, truly, I am in luck," replied Robin, cunningly, "and so indeed is my kinsman, the Major, in having so pretty a housekeeper. But I prithee trouble him to step to the door; I will deliver him a message from his friends in the country, and then go back to my lodgings at the inn."

33. "Nay, the Major has been abed this hour or more," said the lady of the scarlet petticoat;" and it would be to little purpose to disturb him tonight, seeing his evening draught was of the strongest. But he is a kind-hearted man, and it would be as much as my life's worth to let a kinsman of his turn away from the door. You are the good old gentleman's very picture, and I could swear that was his rainy-weather hat. Also he has garments very much resembling those leather smallclothes, But come in, I pray, for I bid you hearty welcome in his name."

34. So saying, the fair and hospitable dame took our hero by the hand; and the touch was light, and the force was gentleness, and though Robin read in her eyes what he did not hear
in her words, yet the slender-waisted woman in the scarlet petticoat proved stronger than the athletic country youth. She had drawn his half-willing footsteps nearly to the threshold, when the opening of a door in the neighborhood startled the Major's housekeeper, and, leaving the Major's kinsman, she vanished speedily into her own domicile. A heavy yawn preceded the appearance of a man, who, like the Moonshine of Pyramus and Thisbe, carried a lantern, needlessly aiding his sister luminary in the heavens. As he walked sleepily up the street, he turned his broad, dull face on Robin, and displayed a long staff, spiked at the end.

35. "Home, vagabond, home!" said the watchman, in accents that seemed to fall asleep as soon as they were uttered. "Home, or we'll set you in the stocks by peep of day!"

36. "This is the second hint of this kind," thought Robin. "I wish they would end my difficulties, by setting me there tonight."

37. Nevertheless, the youth felt an instinctive antipathy towards the guardian of midnight order, which at first prevented him from asking his usual question. But just when the man was about to vanish behind the corner, Robin resolved not to lose the opportunity, and shouted lustily after him,—

38. "I say, friend! will you guide me to the house of my kinsman, Major Molineux?"

39. The watchman made no reply, but turned the corner and was gone; yet Robin seemed to hear the sound of drowsy laughter stealing along the solitary street. At that moment, also, a pleasant titter saluted him from the open window above his head; he looked up, and caught the sparkle of a saucy eye; a round arm beckoned to him, and next he heard light footsteps descending the staircase within. But Robin, being of the household of a New England clergyman, was a good youth, as well as a shrewd one; so he resisted temptation, and fled away.

40. He now roamed desperately, and at random, through the town, almost ready to believe that a spell was on him, like that by which a wizard of his country had once kept three pursuers wandering, a whole winter night, within twenty paces of the cottage which they sought. The streets lay before him, strange and desolate, and the lights were extinguished in almost every house. Twice, however, little parties of men, among whom Robin distinguished individuals in outlandish attire, came hurrying along; but, though on both occasions, they paused to address him, such intercourse did not at all enlighten his perplexity. They did but utter a few words in some language of which Robin knew nothing, and perceiving his inability to answer, bestowed a curse upon him in plain English and hastened away. Finally, the lad determined to knock at the door of every mansion that
might appear worth to be occupied by his kinsman, trusting that perseverance would overcome the fatality that had hitherto thwarted him. Firm in his resolve, he was passing beneath the walls of a church, which formed the corner of two streets, when, as he turned into a shade of its steeple, he encountered a bulky stranger, muffled in a cloak. The man was proceeding with the speed of earnest business, but Robin planted himself full before him, holding the oak cudgel with both hands across his body as a bar to further passage.

41. "Halt, honest man, and answer me a question," said he, very resolutely. "Tell me, this instant, whereabouts is the dwelling of my kinsman, Major Molineux!"

42. "Keep your tongue between your teeth, fool, and let me pass!" said a deep, gruff voice, which Robin partly remembered. "Let me pass, or I'll strike you to the earth!"

43. "No, no, neighbor!" cried Robin, flourishing his cudgel, and then thrusting its larger end close to the man's muffled face. "No, no, I'm not the fool you take me for, nor do you pass till I have an answer to my question. Whereabouts is the dwelling of my kinsman, Major Molineus?"

44. The stranger, instead of attempting to force his passage, stepped back into the moonlight, unmuffled his face, and stared full into that of Robin.

45. "Watch here an hour, and Major Molineux will pass by," said he.

46. Robin gazed with dismay and astonishment on the unprecedented physiognomy of the speaker. The forehead with its double prominence, the broad hooked nose, the shaggy eyebrows, and fiery eyes were those which he had noticed at the inn, but the man's complexion had undergone a singular, or, more properly, a twofold change. One side of the face blazed an intense red, while the other was black as midnight, the division line being in the broad bridge of the nose; and a mouth which seemed to extend from ear to ear was black or red, in contrast to the color of the cheek. The effect was as if two individual devils, a fiend of fire and a fiend of darkness, had united themselves to form this infernal visage. The stranger grinned in Robin's face, muffled his party-colored features, and was out of sight in a moment.

47. "Strange things we travelers see!" ejaculated Robin.

48. He seated himself, however, upon the steps of the church door, resolving to wait the appointed time for his kinsman. A few moments were consumed in philosophical speculations upon the species of man who had just left him; but having settled this point shrewdly, rationally, and satisfactorily, he was compelled to look elsewhere for his amusement. And first he threw his eyes along the street. It was of more respectable appearance than most of those into which he had wandered; and the moon, creating, like the imagina-
tive power, a beautiful strangeness in familiar objects, gave something of romance to a
scene that might not have possessed it in the light of day. The irregular and often quaint
architecture of the houses, some of whose roofs were broken into numerous little peaks,
while others ascended, steep and narrow, into a single point, and others again were square;
the pure snow-white of some of their complexions, the aged darkness of others, and the
thousand sparklings, reflected from bright substances in the walls of many; these matters
engaged Robin’s attention for a while, and then began to grow wearisome. Next he en-
deavored to define the forms of distant objects, starting away, with almost ghostly in-
distinctness, just as his eye appeared to grasp them; and finally he took a minute survey of
an edifice which stood on the opposite side of the street, directly in front of the church
doors, where he was stationed. It was a large, square mansion, distinguished from its neigh-
bors by a balcony, which rested on tall pillars, and by an elaborate Gothic window, com-
municating therewith.

49. “Perhaps this is the very house I have been seeking,” thought Robin.

50. Then he strove to speed away the time, by listening to a murmur which swept con-
tinually along the street, yet was scarcely audible, except to an unaccustomed ear like his;
it was a low, dull, dreamy sound, compounded of many noises, each of which was at too
great a distance to be separately heard. Robin marveled at this snore of a sleeping town,
and marveled more whenever its continuity was broken by now and then a distant shout,
apparently loud where it originated. But altogether it was a sleep-inspiring sound, and, to
shake off its drowsy influence, Robin arose, and climbed a window frame, that he might
view the interior of the church. There the moonbeams came trembling in, and fell down
upon the deserted pews, and extended along the quiet aisles. A fainter yet more awful
radiance was hovering around the pulpit, and one solitary ray had dared to rest upon the
open page of the great Bible. Had nature, in that deep hour, become a worshipper in the
house which man had built? Or was that heavenly light the visible sanctity of the place,—
visible because no earthly and impure feet were within the walls? The scene made Robin’s
heart shiver with a sensation of loneliness stronger than he had ever felt in the remotest
depths of his native woods; so he turned away and sat down again before the door. There
were graves around the church, and now an uneasy thought intruded into Robin’s breast.
What if the object of his search, which had been so often and so strangely thwarted, were
all the time mouldering in his shroud? What if his kinsman should glide through yonder
gate, and nod and smile to him in dimly passing by?

51. “Oh that any breathing thing were here with me!” said Robin.
52. Recalling his thoughts from the uncomfortable track, he sent them over forest, hill, and stream, and attempted to imagine how that evening of ambiguity and weariness had been spent by his father’s household. He pictured them assembled at the door, beneath the tree, the great old tree, which had been spared for its huge twisted trunk and venerable shade, when a thousand leafy brethren fell. There, at the going down of the summer sun, it was his father’s custom to perform domestic worship, that the neighbors might come and join with him like brothers of the family, and that the wayfaring man might pause to drink at the fountain, and keep his heart pure by freshening memory of home. Robin distinguished the seat of every individual of the little audience; he saw the good man in the midst, holding the Scriptures in the golden light that fell from the western clouds; he beheld him close the book and all rise up to pray. He heard the old thanksgivings for daily mercies, the old supplications for their continuance, to which he had so often listened in weariness, but which were now among his dear remembrances. He perceived the slight inequality of his father’s voice when he came to speak of the absent one: he noted how his mother turned her face to the broad and knotted trunk; how his elder brother scorned, because the beard was rough upon his upper lip, to permit his features to be moved; how the younger sister drew down a low hanging branch before her eyes; and how the little one of all, whose sports had hither to broken the decorum of the scene, understood the prayer for her playmate, and burst into clamorous grief. Then he saw them go in at the door; and when Robin would have entered also, the latch tinkled into its place, and he was excluded from his home.

53. “Am I here, or there?” cried Robin, starting; for all at once, when his thoughts had become visible and audible in a dream, the long, wide, solitary street shone out before him.

54. He aroused himself, and endeavored to fix his attention steadily upon the large edifice which he had surveyed before. But still his mind kept vibrating between fancy and reality; by turns, the pillars of the balcony lengthened into the tall, bare stems of pines, dwindled down to human figures, settled again into their true shape and size, and then commenced a new succession of changes. For a single moment, when he deemed himself awake, he could have sworn that a visage—one which he seemed to remember, yet could not absolutely name as his kinsman’s—was looking towards him from the Gothic window. A deeper sleep wrestled with and nearly overcame him, but fled at the sound of footsteps along the opposite pavement. Robin rubbed his eyes, discerned a man passing at the foot of the balcony, and addressed him in a loud, peevish, and lamentable cry.
55. "Hallo, friend! must I wait here all night for my kinsman, Major Molineux?"

56. The sleeping echoes awoke, and answered the voice; and the passenger, barely able to discern a figure sitting in the oblique shade of the steeple, traversed the street to obtain a nearer view. He was himself a gentleman in the prime, of open, intelligent, cheerful, and altogether prepossessing countenance. Perceiving a country youth, apparently homeless and without friends, he accosted him in a tone of real kindness, which had become strange to Robin's ears.

57. "Well, my good lad, why are you sitting here?" inquired he. "Can I be of service to you in any way?"

58. "I am afraid not, sir," replied Robin, despondingly; "yet I shall take it kindly, if you'll answer me a single question. I've been searching, half the night, for one Major Molineux; now, sir, is there really such a person in these parts, or am I dreaming?"

59. "Major Molineux! The name is not altogether strange to me," said the gentleman, smiling. "Have you any objection to telling me the nature of your business with him?"

60. Then Robin briefly related that his father was a clergyman, settled on a small salary, at a long distance back in the country, and that he and Major Molineux were brothers' children. The Major, having inherited riches, and acquired civil and military rank, had visited his cousin, in great pomp, a year or two before; had manifested much interest in Robin and an elder brother, and being childless himself, had thrown out hints respecting the future establishment of one of them in life. The elder brother was destined to succeed to the farm which his father cultivated in the interval of sacred duties; it was therefore determined that Robin should profit by his kinsman's generous intentions, especially as he seemed to be rather the favorite, and was thought to possess other necessary endowments.

61. "For I have the name of being a shrewd youth," observed Robin, in this part of his story.

62. "I doubt not you deserve it," replied his new friend, goodnaturedly; "but pray proceed."

63. "Well, sir, being nearly eighteen years old, and well grown, as you see," continued Robin, drawing himself up to his full height, "I thought it high time to begin in the world. So my mother and sister put me in handsome trim, and my father gave me half the remnant of his last year's salary, and five days ago I started for this place, to pay the Major a visit. But, would you believe it sir! I crossed the ferry a little after dark, and have yet found nobody that would show me the way to his dwelling; only, an hour or two since, I
was told to wait here, and Major Molineux would pass by."
64. "Can you describe the man who told you this?" inquired the gentleman.
65. "Oh, he was a very ill-favored fellow, sir," replied Robin, "with two great bumps on
his forehead, a hook nose, fiery eyes; and, what struck me as the strangest, his face was of
two different colors. Do you happen to know such a man, sir?"
66. "Not intimately," answered the stranger, "but I chanced to meet him a little time
previous to your stopping me. I believe you may trust his word, and that the Major will
very shortly pass through this street. In the meantime, as I have a singular curiosity to
witness your meeting, I will sit down here upon the steps and bear you company."
67. He seated himself accordingly, and soon engaged his companion in animated dis-
course. It was but a brief continuance, however, for a noise of shouting, which had long
been remotely audible, drew so much nearer that Robin inquired its cause.
68. "What may be the meaning of this uproar?" asked he. "Truly, if your town be always
as noisy, I shall find little sleep while I am an inhabitant."
69. "Why, indeed, friend Robin, there do appear to be three or four riotous fellows
abroad tonight," replied the gentleman. "You must not expect all the stillness of your
native woods here in our streets. But the watch will shortly be at the heels of these lads
and"
70. "Ay, and set them in the stocks by peep of day," interrupted Robin, recollecting his
own encounter with the drowsy lantern bearer. "But, dear sir, if I may trust my ears, an
army of watchmen would never make head against such a multitude of rioters. There
were at least a thousand voices went up to make that one shout."
71. "May not a man have several voices, Robin, as well as two complexions?" said his
friend.
72. "Perhaps a man may; but Heaven forbid that a woman should!" responded the
shrewd youth, thinking of the seductive tones of the Major's housekeeper.
73. The sounds of a trumpet in some neighboring street now became so evidence and
continual, that Robin's curiosity was strongly excited. In addition to the shouts, he heard
frequent bursts from many instruments of discord, and a wild and confused laughter filled
up the intervals. Robin rose from the steps, and looked wistfully towards a point whither
people seemed to be hastening.
74. "Surely some prodigious merrymaking is going on," exclaimed he. "I have laughed
very little since I left home, sir, and should be sorry to lose an opportunity. Shall we step
round the corner by that darkish house, and take our share of fun?"
75. "Sit down again, sit down, good Robin," replied the gentleman, laying his hand on the skirt of the gray coat. "You forget that we must wait here for your kinsman; and there is reason to believe that he will pass by, in the course of a very few moments."

76. The near approach of the uproar had now disturbed the neighborhood; windows flew open on all sides; and many heads, in the attire of the pillow, and confused by sleep suddenly broken, were protruded to the gaze of whoever had leisure to observe them. Eager voices hailed each other from house to house, all demanding the explanation, which not a soul could give. Half-dressed men hurried towards the unknown commotion, stumbling as they went over the stone steps that thrust themselves into the narrow footwalk. The shouts, the laughter, and the tuneless bray, the antipodes of music, came onwards with increasing din, till scattered individuals, and then denser bodies, began to appear round a corner at the distance of a hundred yards.

77. "Will you recognize your kinsman, if he passes in this crowd?" inquired the gentleman.

78. "Indeed, I can't warrant it, sir; but I'll take my stand here, and keep a bright look-out," answered Robin, descending to the outer edge of the pavement.

79. A mighty stream of people now emptied into the street, and came rolling slowly towards the church. A single horseman wheeled the corner in the midst of them, and close behind him came a band of fearful wind instruments, sending forth a fresher discord now that no intervening buildings kept it from the ear. Then a redder light disturbed the moonbeams, and a dense multitude of torches shone along the street, concealing, by their glare, whatever object they illuminated. The single horseman, clad in a military dress, and bearing a drawn sword, rode onward as the leader, and, by his fierce and variegated countenance, appeared like war personified; the red of one cheek was an emblem of fire and sword; the blackness of the other betokened the mourning that attends them. In his train were wild figures in the Indian dress, and many fantastic shapes without a model, giving the whole march a visionary air, as if a dream had broken forth from some feverish brain, and were sweeping visibly through the midnight streets. A mass of people, inactive, except as applauding spectators, hemmed the procession in; and several women ran along the sidewalk, piercing the confusion of heavier sounds with their shrill voices of mirth or terror.

80. "The double-faced fellow has his eye upon me," muttered Robin, with an indefinite but an uncomfortable idea that he was himself to bear a part in the pageantry.

81. The leader turned himself in the saddle, and fixed his glance full upon the country youth, as the steed went slowly by. When Robin had freed his eyes from those fiery ones,
the musicians were passing before him, and the torches were close at hand; but the unsteady brightness of the latter formed a veil which he could not penetrate. The rattling of wheels over the stones sometimes found its way to his ear, and confused traces of a human form appeared at intervals, and then melted into vivid light. A moment more, and the leader thundered a command to halt: the trumpets vomited a horrid breath, and then held their peace; the shouts and laughter of the people died away, and there remained only a universal hum, allied to silence. Right before Robin's eyes was an uncovered cart. There the torches blazed the brightest, there the moon shone out like day, and there, in tar-and-feathery dignity, sat his kinsman, Major Molineux!

82. He was an elderly man, of large and majestic person, and strong, square features, betokening a steady soul; but steady as it was, his enemies had found means to shake it. His face was pale as death, and far more ghastly; the broad forehead was contracted in his agony, so that his eyebrows formed one grizzled line; his eyes were red and wild, and the foam hung white upon his quivering lip. His whole frame was agitated by a quick and continual tremor, which his pride strove to quell, even in those circumstances of overwhelming humiliation. But perhaps the bitterest pang of all was when his eyes met those of Robin; for he evidently knew him on the instant, as the youth stood witnessing the foul disgrace of a head grown gray in honor. They stared at each other in silence, and Robin's knees shook, and his hair bristled, with a mixture of pity and terror. Soon, however, a bewildering excitement began to seize upon his mind; the preceding adventures of the night, the unexpected appearance of the crowd, the torches, the confused din and the hush that followed, the spectre of his kinsman reviled by that great multitude,—all this, and, more than all, a perception of tremendous ridicule in the whole scene, affected him with a sort of mental inebriety. At that moment a voice of sluggish merriment saluted Robin's ears; he turned instinctively, and just behind the corner of the church stood the lantern bearer, rubbing his eyes, and drowsily enjoying the lad's amazement. Then he heard a peal of laughter like the ringing of silvery bells; a woman twitched his arm, a saucy eye met his, and he saw the lady of the scarlet petticoat. A sharp, dry cachinnation appealed to his memory, and standing on tiptoe in the crowd, with his white apron over his head, he beheld the courteous little innkeeper. And lastly, there sailed over the heads of the multitude a great, broad laugh, broken in the midst by two sepulchral hems; thus, "Haw, haw,—hem, hem,—haw, haw, haw, haw!"

83. The sound proceeded from the balcony of the opposite edifice, and thither Robin turned his eyes. In front of the Gothic window stood the old citizen, wrapped in a wide
gown, his gray periwig exchanged for a nightcap, which was thrust back from his forehead, and his silk stockings hanging about his legs. He supported himself on his polished cane in a fit of convulsive merriment, which manifested itself on his solemn old features like a funny inscription on a tombstone. Then Robin seemed to hear the voices of the barbers, of the guests of the inn, and of all who had made sport of him that night. The contagion was spreading among the multitude, when all at once, it seized upon Robin, and he sent forth a shout of laughter that echoed through the street,—every man shook his sides, every man emptied his lungs, but Robin’s shout was the loudest there. The cloud spirits peeped from their silvery islands, as the congregated mirth went roaring up the sky! The Man in the Moon heard the far bellow. “Oho,” quoth he, “the old earth is frolicsome tonight!”

84. When there was a momentary calm in that tempestuous sea of sound, the leader gave the sign, the procession resumed its march. On they went, like fiends that throng in mockery around some dead potentate, mighty no more, but majestic still in his agony. On they went, in counterfeited pomp, in senseless uproar, in frenzied merriment, trampling all on an old man’s heart. On swept the tumult, and left a silent street behind.

85. “Well, Robin, are you dreaming?” inquired the gentleman, laying his hand on the youth’s shoulder.

86. Robin started, and withdrew his arm from the stone post to which he had instinctively clung, as the living stream rolled by him. His cheek was somewhat pale, and his eye not quite as lively as in the earlier part of the evening.

87. “Will you be kind enough to show me the way to the ferry?” said he, after a moment’s pause.

88. “You have, then, adopted a new subject of inquiry?” observed his companion, with a smile.

89. “Why, yes, sir,” replied Robin, rather dryly. “Thanks to you, and to my other friends, I have at last met my kinsman, and he will scarce desire to see my face again. I begin to grow weary of a town life, sir. Will you show me the way to the ferry?”

90. “No, my good friend Robin,—not tonight, at least,” said the gentleman. “Some few days hence, if you wish it, I will speed you on your journey. Or, if you prefer to remain with us, perhaps, as you are a shrewd youth, you may rise in the world without the help of your kinsman, Major Molineux.”