The incident at Merry Mount (1628) was a trivial conflict between Puritans and a non-Puritan, Thomas Morton (ca. 1579-1647). Although it may seem a trifling happening from the modern historical point of view, early New England historians treated it very seriously. William Bradford (1590-1657), who was then governor of the Plymouth Colony, gave a minute description of the incident in Of Plymouth Plantation, representing the Puritan standpoint of the conflict; whereas his antagonist, Thomas Morton, criticized the Puritan attitude in New English Canaan (1637). Besides these two accounts, the incident was recorded by several early New England annalists. But since their accounts were mainly based upon Bradford’s manuscript, we may assume that the accounts of Bradford and Morton are essentially the only source histories about the incident. At this point, however, we are forced to face the difficulty of trying to see the conflict precisely and impartially, for the two accounts differ so much
that we find almost no agreement. Since the historical accounts do not provide us with enough certainties, it becomes necessary for historians to deduce the truth from the partial accounts.4

The trifling episode at Merry Mount has also been taken up as historical materials by several American writers. It is no doubt a pity that we have no contemporary records except Bradford's and Morton's, but it may offer, in some sense, a good opportunity for writers with historical sense to show their skills in literary transmutation: writers in fiction, who need not seek historical certainties, are allowed to create their fictional world based upon historical materials. In the case of the incident at Merry Mount, the fact that only the framework is certain may be fortunate for writers in fiction, who could expand the story with their imagination. Nathaniel Hawthorne's tale "The May-Pole of Merry Mount" is considered by many critics as the best piece of fiction on the Merry Mount incident. The tale has been very influential; through reading the tale many Americans have become familiar with the incident and such Puritan characters as John Endicott and Peter Palfrey. Many of the writers who created historical fiction about the incident had read Hawthorne's tale and must have found some attraction in it. In this sense, Hawthorne plays a very important role in the making of the "legend" of the maypole at Merry Mount.

The aim of this paper is to see the views of the three writers on the incident—Bradford, Morton, and Hawthorne—in dealing with this local event which has continuing significance in American history. First, I will compare the quite different views of Bradford and Morton and see what they thought was the significance of the incident respectively. After these two historians, I will see how Hawthorne viewed
the conflict and how he transmuted historical materials into fictional form with his imagination. First of all, however, it may be necessary to clarify the historical fact of the incident.

II

In 1625 Captain Wollaston arrived in New England and established a fur-trading post at the site of the present city of Quincy. He named his settlement Mount Wollaston and sought the profits of the fur trade. As one of his proprietors came Thomas Morton, a gentleman by birth and a lawyer of Clifford's Inn. Morton was a bohemian, a humorist, sometimes with no moral standards of conduct. With a tendency to get into fights and lawsuits Morton came to New England after a controversial inheritance case. When Wollaston, finding this settlement unsatisfactory, departed for Virginia with most of his men, Morton persuaded the remaining few to settle down by plying them with strong drink and promising to free them from their indentures and to make them his partners. He succeeded in taking over the settlement and then turned it into a place of revel, reviving the old English tradition. He also changed the name of Mount Wollaston into Merry Mount. Morton invited the Indians to his settlement and danced with them around a maypole, which the Puritans considered an idol; through his good relationship with the Indians, he prospered in the fur trade.

Only twenty-five miles away from Merry Mount lived the Puritans. It was impossible for the two settlements of incompatible values—sober Plymouth and this carefree Merry Mount—to get along well. In the spring of 1628, the Puritans, objecting to Morton, sent Miles
Standish with his men to Merry Mount in order to take Morton by force. They marched into Merry Mount and captured the revelers easily; five of Morton's seven men at the settlement had gone hunting for furs, and only Morton and two others were left there at that time. Moreover, these three did not show courage to resist Standish because they had drunk too much beer. Morton was sent back to England, but those of his companions who remained there still kept the same revelries. In the autumn of 1628, John Endicott, who had just arrived in New England, was sent to Merry Mount. He cut down the maypole and dispersed Morton's remaining followers, and then Merry Mount was renamed Mount Dagon.

III

William Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation* and Thomas Morton's *New English Canaan*, the two essential accounts of the incident at Merry Mount, show their antithetical attitudes toward the conflict. It is the nature of historical writings that, though they deal with the same subject, their explanations differ much on account of their different points of view and beliefs. The sharp contrast of the two accounts reveal their quite different views on the significance of the trivial conflict.

William Bradford, the governor of the Plymouth Colony and its historian, wrote his major work *Of Plymouth Plantation*, which is considered to be the most remarkable piece of writing produced in seventeenth-century New England. Bradford, though he himself was not involved in the conflict, relates it in detail. According to Bradford, Morton "had little respect amongst them, and was slighted by
the meanest servants," but "having more craft than honesty" (p. 205), he took over Wollaston's settlement. Bradford then describes the revelries of Merry Mount from the Puritan point of view:

After this they fell to great licentiousness and led a dissolute life, pouring out themselves into all profaneness. And Morton became Lord of Misrule, and maintained (as it were) a School of Atheism. And after they had got some goods into their hands, and got much by trading with the Indians, they spent it as vainly in quaffing and drinking, both wine and strong waters in great excess (and, as some reported) £10 worth in a morning. They also set up a maypole, drinking and dancing about it many days together, inviting the Indian women for their consorts, dancing and frisking together like so many fairies, or furies, rather; and worse practices. As if they had anew revived and celebrated the feasts of the Roman goddess Flora, or the beastly practices of the mad Bacchanalians. Morton likewise, to show his poetry composed sundry rhymes and verses, some tending to lasciviousness, and others to the detraction and scandal of some persons, which he affixed to this idle or idol maypole. (pp. 205-6)

To see Bradford's view of the significance of the conflict, it is necessary to examine what he thought were the causes of the conflict.

In Bradford's account, four causes of the conflict are related from the Puritan standpoint. The first is the moral dimension: the Puritans could not stand the immoral way of life at Merry Mount. Such revelries as cited above enraged the Puritans who lived very near to
Morton's place. Secondly, the Puritans and Morton competed in their trading with the Indians. In *Of Plymouth Plantation* Bradford does not mention overtly the economic rivalry of the two parties: "Hearing what gain the French and fishermen made by trading pieces, powder and shot to the Indians, he [Morton] as the head of this consortship began the practice of the same in these parts" (p. 206). As the result of Morton's trading, the Indians got guns and ammunition, which multiplied the Puritans' fear of Indian attacks. "His neighbours meeting the Indians in the woods armed with guns in this sort, it was a terror unto them [the Puritans] who lived stragglingly and were of no strength in any place" (p. 208). For the Puritans, this was a sufficient reason to remove Morton's settlement even by force.

The aspect which Bradford found most significant in the conflict was the religious threat to the Puritans' existence. Bradford took it seriously as is seen from the following:

All the scum of the country or any discontents would flock to him [Morton] from all places, if this nest [Merry Mount] was not broken. And they should stand in more fear of their lives and goods in short time from this wicked and debased crew than from the savages themselves. (p. 208)

The early Puritans in New England always reflected upon why they came to the New World and what the place meant to them. For them New England should not be like Old England or anywhere else, for "they were the saving remnant of England; they had the responsibility of regenerating all England."
Focus on these four aspects of Bradford’s attitude toward Merry Mount reflects another typical Puritan value and belief: Bradford did not like to point out overtly the economic or worldly dimension of the conflict. He stresses instead the religious threat to their existence; in other words, he emphasized the religious significance of the conflict. No doubt he needed to stress the threat in order to keep the Puritan communal unity, but moreover he himself was a faithful Puritan who had a tendency to find in everything some religious significance.

IV

Thomas Morton’s *New English Canaan*, a unique history of early New England from the non-Puritan point of view, was written before Bradford’s *Of Plymouth Plantation*, in which Bradford criticizes *New English Canaan* as “an infamous and scurrilous book against many godly and chief men of the country, full of lies and slanders and fraught with profane calumnies against their names and persons and the ways of God” (p. 217). In *New English Canaan*, Morton, using English folk tradition, acknowledges that the spirit of festivity was defeated in New England. Morton, having quite a different perspective from Bradford, reveals his non-Puritan attitude in the description and explanation of the Merry Mount incident.

As the Puritan view of the revelries is well seen in Bradford’s account, Morton’s non-Puritan view is seen in his defense of the innocent festivities, so he believed, at Merry Mount:

The Inhabitants of Pasonagessit (having translated the name of their habitation from that ancient Salvage name to Ma-re
Mount; and being resolved to have the new name confirmed for a memorial to after ages) did devise amongst themselves to have it performed in a solemn manner with Revels, & merriment after the old English custom: prepared to set up a Maypole upon the festival day of Philip and Jacob; & therefore brewed a barrel of excellent beer, & provided a case of bottles to be spent, with other good cheer, for all comers of that day. And because they would have it in a complete form, they had prepared a song fitting to the time and present occasion. And upon May-day they brought the Maypole to the place appointed, with drums, guns, pistols, and other fitting instruments, for that purpose; and there erected it with the help of Salvages, that came thether of purpose to see the manner of our Revels. A goodly pine tree of 80. foote longe, was reared up, with a pear of buckshorns nailed one, somewhat near unto the top of it: where it stood as a faire sea marke for directions; how to finde out the way to mine Hoste of Ma-re Mount.⁹

One of the causes of the conflict at Merry Mount was that the Puritans regarded Morton's acts as immoral and could not let the revelries go on in their vicinity. Morton, in a way, defied the Puritan notions of moral conduct by making revelries and publishing the book which maintains his belief. He anticipated, and possibly enjoyed, the Puritans' anxiety: "This harmles mirth made by younge men (that lived in hope to have wives brought over to them, that would save them a labour to make a voyage to fetch any over) was much distasted, of the precise Separatists" (p. 135).
Though Bradford does not point out clearly the economic background of the conflict, Morton considered it most important: “The Separatists envying the prosperity, and hope of the Plantation at Mare Mount (which they perceived beganne to come forward, and to be in a good way for gaine in the Beaver trade) conspired together against mine Host especially” (p. 137). The fact that Morton kept a good relationship with the Indians made his economic prosperity possible. The economic prosperity was not so important for the Puritans as for Morton, though early Plymouth was a fragile colony where a firm economic basis was yet to be achieved.

Morton did not understand the religious dimension of the conflict, which Bradford considered most significant. Morton could not see the religious threat he gave to the Puritan community; he only thought that the Puritans hated him because he belonged to the Church of England:

Mine host was a man that indeavoured to advance the dignity of the Church of England; which they (on the contrary part) would laboure to vilifie; with uncivile termes: envying against the sacred booke of common prayer, and mine host that used it in a laudable manner amongst his family, as a practise of piety. (p. 138)

The contrast of views and values between Bradford and Morton is clear now. Morton, seeking the economic prosperity and joyful time, found the economic aspect of the conflict most important and was unable to understand the Puritan view and ways of life. Bradford, on the
other hand, saw in the conflict a crucial problem as to whether the Puritan community could survive to build there a kingdom of God.

V

It is an interesting fact that such a trifling episode at Merry Mount has been used as historical materials by several prominent American writers. These writers, though differing in their treatments of the subject, have more or less found some symbolic significance in the conflict and reflected their views and values in their writings. It is true to say, as John P. McWilliams, Jr. pointed out that “Merry Mount has provided the historical writer a mirror in which he could find confirmation for his own ethics, for the values of his class, or for assumptions widely shared in his region or generation.” Among the writings that deal with the incident, Hawthorne’s tale “The May-Pole of Merry Mount” is the best-known and is considered to be the most artistic piece of fiction. In this section, I will see how he described the incident and what significance he found in it.

In order to clarify Hawthorne’s view of the conflict, it is essential to know the historical accounts he referred to. Though Bradford’s Of Plymouth Plantation and Morton’s New English Canaan were written in the first half of the seventeenth century, Hawthorne did not have chance to read them before writing “The May-Pole of Merry Mount,” which was published in The Token for 1836 and collected in Twice-told Tales in 1837. Morton’s book was not available in America before the new edition was brought out in 1838; Bradford’s account of the Plymouth Plantation remained in manuscript until 1856. What Hawthorne could refer to, as he says in his prefatory note to
"The May-Pole of Merry Mount," was "the facts recorded on the grave pages of our New England annalists." Our New England annalists” could not be Bradford or Thomas Morton, but probably the four annalists—Nathaniel Morton, Thomas Prince, Joseph Barlow Felt, and Francis Baylies—who drew upon Bradford’s unpublished manuscript. These four wrote their histories by and large from the Puritan point of view by following Bradford’s account, and provided Hawthorne with the historical framework of the incident.

In “The May-Pole of Merry Mount” Hawthorne takes the side of neither the Puritans nor the Merry Mounters. Though at first he seems to be in sympathy with the happy state of Merry Mount and to be against the dismal Puritans, it gradually becomes apparent that the Puritan way is cruel if the revelries are illusory. Hawthorne shows us that it is the conflict of the two different attitudes, neither of which can understand or accept the values of the other. Between these two incompatible forces, Hawthorne creates the Lord and Lady of the May, Edgar and Edith, who have just been married at Merry Mount but have anxiety about their present situation. The couple is the golden mean between the stern Puritans and illusory revelers. Hawthorne shows his attitude toward the conflict by creating the middle way of the couple.

It is surprising that Hawthorne held such a detached view toward the conflict in spite of the fact that most of the histories he read were written by and large from the Puritan viewpoint. At this point, however, we need to take into our consideration Hawthorne’s profound interest in his ancestors, who distinguished themselves as rigorous and cruel Puritan leaders. Hawthorne’s attitude toward them was
ambivalent; he had not only dark images of their cruel and bloody deeds, but also a pride in his pedigree which was "always . . . in respectability; never, so far as I [Hawthorne] have known, disgraced by a single unworthy member." Nourished by his deep concern for his ancestors and the colonial history, Hawthorne came to have "a very acute historical sense," and was able to treat both the Puritans and the Merry Mounters impartially. At the end of the tale, the Puritans are victorious as in history, but Hawthorne leaves the future of the couple ambiguous. His creation of the couple and their equivocal future gives us a clue to find what significance he saw in the conflict.

Hawthorne does not mention at all the economic cause of the incident, which Morton took most important and Bradford also realized. Hawthorne must have known the causes and details of the conflict, but ignored the economic dimension for his purpose of creating fiction. Neither does he mention the possibility of the Indian attacks with guns and pistols. These two material dimensions of the incident did not appeal to Hawthorne, who instead paid his attention to the three inner dimensions—the religious, moral, and psychological dimensions.

Though these three inner dimensions are intertwined with one another in Hawthorne's tale, I will examine each of them separately in order to establish clear discrimination between Hawthorne and the two historians—Bradford and Morton. Of the three dimensions, the religious dimension of the conflict plays the smallest part in Hawthorne's tale. The religious significance, which Bradford took most seriously as the threat to the existence of the Puritan community and
which Morton also noticed, is described just as an underlying historical background. In the tale Hawthorne describes the religious threat of Merry Mount against the Puritans as follows:

The Puritans affirmed, that, when a psalm was pealing from their place of worship, the echo, which the forest sent them back, seemed often like the chorus of a jolly catch, closing with a roar of laughter. Who but the fiend, and his bond-slaves, the crew of Merry Mount, had thus disturbed them! (pp. 61-62)

As for the religious aspect of the tale, Hawthorne, in criticizing the Puritan intolerance, seems to be in sympathy with the people at Merry Mount.

The second aspect Hawthorne found in the conflict is the moral contrast of the two settlements, of which both Bradford and Morton also were aware. Hawthorne describes the revelers at Merry Mount:

Their leaders were men who had sported so long with life, that when Thought and Wisdom came, even these unwelcome guests were led astray, by the crowd of vanities which they should have put to flight. Erring Thought and perverted Wisdom were made to put on masques, and play the fool. The men of whom we speak, after losing the heart's fresh gaiety, imagined a wild philosophy of pleasure, and came hither to act out their latest day-dream. (p. 59)

On the other hand, "a band of Puritans, who watched the scene, invi-
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Hawthorne obviously criticizes the superficial happiness of the Merry Mounters: “Sworn triflers of a lifetime, they would not venture among the sober truths of life, not even to be truly blest” (p. 60). Seeing the religious and the moral aspects, we find that Hawthorne criticizes both sides—the Puritans for their religious intolerance and the Merry Mounters for their immoral manners.

The most distinctive aspect in Hawthorne’s tale is the psychological significance which he perceived in the conflict. From the outset the two opposing powers are represented in terms of human psychology: “Jollity and gloom were contending for an empire” (p. 54). Hawthorne vivifies the contrast of human psychology with the use of the visual contrasts such as those of light, color, and vibrancy: for example, he describes how the Merry Mounters “stood in the broad smile of sunset” (p. 56), but “the men of iron [the Puritans] shook their heads and frowned so darkly, that the revellers looked up, imagining that a momentary cloud had overcast the sunshine” (p. 61). In the tale the maypole is the central symbol of the jolly Merry Mounters; “the Puritan May-Pole” is their whipping post.21

After the description of the mirth at Merry Mount, the Lord and Lady of the May appear. They stand in an ambivalent place, for they are among the jolly people but feel the gloom in their mind. This ambivalence is well expressed in Edith’s words: “I struggle as with a dream, and fancy that these shapes of our jovial friends are visionary, and their mirth unreal, and that we are no true Lord and Lady of the May” (p. 58). Hawthorne, after showing a symbolic contrast of
human psychology, places the Lord and Lady of the May between these two powers, and suggests that both "the grizzly saints" and "the gay sinners" pursue their extremes respectively. The attitude of the couple who are struggling between them is true to human nature: they are the symbol of human nature that has to be confronted with crucial moments.

In spite of his saying that "the future complexion of New England was involved in this important quarrel" (p. 62), Hawthorne, at the end of the tale, does not clarify his vision of New England, only showing the attitude of the couple that represents struggling human psychology: "They went heavenward, supporting each other along the difficult path which it was their lot to tread, and never wasted one regretful thought on the vanities of Merry Mount" (p. 67). Though Hawthorne does not make clear the future of the couple, we can at least get some hopeful view in the fact that Endicott, in spite of his cruelty, shows his sympathy for the couple. It is an irony that it is Endicott, not the revelers, who can understand the anxiety of the couple. With no clear statement of Hawthorne's vision of New England and of the future of the couple, the tale, being true to the historical fact, ends with the Puritans' victory: "As the moral gloom of the world overpowers all systematic gaiety, even so was their home of wild mirth made desolate amid the sad forest" (p. 66-67). After all, it is the contrast and conflict of human psychology that Hawthorne emphasizes above anything else in the tale. The creation of the two fictional characters reveals Hawthorne's deep concern for the psychological significance of the conflict.

As Hawthorne's emphasis is upon the psychological dimension of
the conflict, he sometimes distorts the actual historical facts for his fictional purpose: the introduction of such a character as William Blackstone; the omission of Thomas Morton himself; the combining of two separate episodes—the attack of Miles Standish in the spring and the hewing down of the maypole in the autumn. We must keep in mind, however, that Merry Mount in Hawthorne’s tale is not Merry Mount in history. Through both his way of transmutation of history into fiction and his art of creative imagination, his view of the incident can be seen: Hawthorne, who was much more interested in the human psychology than the material aspects of guns and Indians, naturally perceived and described the psychological significance of the incident. Therefore, “The May-Pole of Merry Mount,” in which Hawthorne goes beyond the particulars of history to suggest a human truth, is “a sort of allegory” (p. 54) on human psychology.

VI

In spite of its small scale in history, the incident at Merry Mount has offered usable historical materials to American historical writers. Whether historians or writers in fiction, they reveal their standpoints and values when dealing with the conflict. William Bradford, as the leader of the Puritan community, stressed the religious significance of the incident, showing Puritan intolerance and his effort to unite his community. Thomas Morton, on the other hand, saw in the conflict the economic significance, revealing his non-Puritan attitude toward the Indians, the fur trades, and the revelries.

About two hundred years later, Nathaniel Hawthorne, who had a deep understanding of the colonial history, perceived the psycholog-
cal significance in the conflict. With skill of transformation of historical materials into fictional form, Hawthorne succeeded in the symbolic treatment of the subject—the symbolic contrast of human psychology in the conflict. "The May-Pole of Merry Mount" is certainly one of Hawthorne's best historical tales that confirm his discovery and mastery of a usable American past.

NOTES

1 When I say "Puritans," it includes both the Separatists (i.e. the Pilgrims) and the Non-Separatists. But since the main focus of this paper is upon the conflict between Thomas Morton and the Pilgrims in the Plymouth Colony, the term "Puritans" in most cases refers to the Pilgrims.

2 Bradford's account, written between 1630 and 1657, remained in manuscript until the publication in 1856.

3 The New England historians such as Nathaniel Morton, Cotton Mather, Thomas Prince, Thomas Hutchinson, Joseph Barlow Felt, and John Gorham Palfrey used Bradford's account as the historical truth and did not consider Bradford's Puritan standpoint in the conflict.


5 Though it is often believed that Morton had pagan manners, he was not a pagan at all. See Charles M. Andrews, The Colonial Period of American History (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1938), I, 332.


7 David W. Noble, Historians against History: The Frontier Thesis and the National Covenant in American Historical Writing since 1830 (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1965), p. 6.

8 On the significance of New English Canaan in early New England literature, see Donald F. Connors, Thomas Morton (New York: Twayne
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10 According to Andrews, “Morton understood the Indian much better than did the Pilgrims or the Puritans and his method of handling them proved not only enjoyable but eminently profitable” (*The Colonial Period of American History*, I, 362-63).

11 Washington Irving used Morton’s *New English Canaan* in his treatment of Indian life in *The Sketch Book* (1819-20); Lydia Maria Francis Child makes a brief reference to Morton in her romance *Hobomok* (1824); Catharine Maria Sedgwick mentions Morton as the prisoner of the Puritans in Boston in *Hope Leslie* (1827); Nathaniel Hawthorne created “The May-Pole of Merry Mount” (1835), which is the most artistic of all fictions concerning the incident at Merry Mount; John Greenleaf Whittier, in his verse narrative “The Bridal of Pennacock” (1844), relates a story of the Indians, derived from Morton’s book; John Lothrop Motley, who had read *New English Canaan* carefully, wrote *Merry-Mount: A Romance of the Massachusetts Colony* (1849), in which Morton is a prominent figure; Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, in his poem “The Landlord’s Tale: The Rhyme of Sir Christopher,” *Tales of a Wayside Inn* (1873), refers briefly to Morton, taking the words of Bradford in interpreting the character of Morton; Richard L. Stokes, borrowing materials from Hawthorne’s tale and Morton’s book, wrote a dramatic poem *Merry Mount* (1932), in which Bradford is the central figure and Morton plays only a minor historical figure (a year after its publication, *Merry Mount* appeared as the libretto for an opera); Stephen Vincent Benét treated Morton in his poem entitled “Miles Standish” in *A Book of Americans* (1933), in his story *The Devil and Daniel Webster* (1937), and in his long poem *Western Star* (1943); L. S. Davidson, Jr. wrote a prose fiction *The Disturber* (1964), in which Morton plays a leading role; Robert Lowell wrote *Endecott and the Red Cross*, the first of three plays in *The Old Glory* (1965), the note of which indicates that Morton’s book and the two tales by Hawthorne—“The May-Pole of Merry Mount” and “Endecott and the Red Cross” (1837)—were his sources.
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13 The Token (1827-42), a Christmas and New Year's gift book published in Boston by S. G. Goodrich, was annually issued in the fall preceding its year of identification on the title page.

14 See G. Harrison Orians, “Hawthorne and ‘The Maypole of Merry-Mount,’” Modern Language Notes, LIII (1938), 159. According to Orians, there were only two known American copies of New English Canaan, which were owned by John Q. Adams who bought one in Europe and Henry Brevoort who received one as a gift from Sir Walter Scott.


16 The histories of the four annalists which Hawthorne probably used are as follows: Nathaniel Morton (Bradford’s nephew), New England’s Memorial (1669; 1826); Thomas Prince, A Chronological History of New-England in the Form of Annals (1736; 1826); Joseph Barlow Felt, The Annals of Salem, from its First Settlement (1827); Francis Baylies, An Historical Memoir of the Colony of New Plymouth (1830). For Hawthorne’s sources, see Marion L. Kesselring, Hawthorne’s Reading, 1828-1850: A Transcription and Identification of Titles Recorded in the Charge-Books of the Salem Athenaeum (New York: New York Public Library, 1949); Neal Frank Doubleday, Hawthorne’s Early Tales, A Critical Study (Durham, N. C.: Duke Univ. Press, 1972), pp. 92-101; and G. Harrison Orians, “Hawthorne and ‘The Maypole of Merry-Mount.’ ”

17 Though critics of Hawthorne differ in their interpretations of the two attitudes or values, I think it important to appreciate the meaning of the place upon which he centers his story. When he picked up the material of the tale, he must have seen in it some New England characteristic. Though John E. Becker contends that it is “the conflict between reality and dream” (Hawthorne’s Historical Allegory: An Examination of the American Con-
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science [Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat, 1971], p. 21), it rather seems to me the conflict between the two realities pursuing different dreams: the Puritans pursue the dream of the kingdom of God, while the Merry Mounters seek somewhat dream-like festivity. It is more pertinent to follow Michael Davitt Bell's remark that the tale "presents a struggle, not between Old England and New, but finally between two possible New World futures—one an effort to hold to old ways, and the other an effort to strike out in new, independent directions" (Hawthorne and the Historical Romance of New England [Princeton, N. J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1971], p. 123).

18 William Hathorne (ca. 1607-81), who came to New England during the period 1630-33, was a stern persecutor of the Quakers; William's son, John Hathorne (1641-1717), served as a magistrate at the Salem witchcraft trials in 1692.


20 T. S. Eliot, "The Hawthorne Aspect," The Little Review, V (1918), 50. In the essay Eliot, comparing Hawthorne and Henry James, says: "In one thing alone Hawthorne is more solid than James: he had a very acute historical sense. His erudition in the small field of American colonial history was extensive, and he made most fortunate use of it" (p. 50).


22 Though William Blackstone is called "priest of Baal" in the tale, the actual historical figure William Blackstone was not at all such a pagan character. Hawthorne used the name of Blackstone in an unhistorical way, as Hawthorne acknowledges in his footnote to the tale: "The Rev. Mr. Blackstone, though an eccentric, is not known to have been an immoral man. We rather doubt his identity with the priest of Merry Mount" (p. 63).

23 Hawthorne does not create Morton as a character, but indirectly sketches him through the figure of William Blackstone. In "Main-street" (1849), Hawthorne sketches Morton as follows: "Among these Puritans and Round-
heads, we observe the very model of a Cavalier, with the curling lovelock, the fantastically trimmed beard, the embroidery, the ornamented rapier, the gilded dagger, and all other foppishnesses that distinguished the wild gallants who rode headlong to their overthrow in the cause of King Charles. This is Morton of Merry Mount, who has come hither to hold a council with Endicott, but will shortly be his prisoner” (“Main-street,” *The Snow-Image and Uncollected Tales* [“The Centenary Edition”; 1974], p. 62).