An essential component of the creative process, self-consciousness mediates between the created narrative and the given world; between the author's intentionality and the ideological, philosophical, cultural and textual processes that invariably tend to shape a particular narrative; between the fluid indeterminacy of language and the efforts of one man, one man alone, to create definite form and specific meaning. The study of the self-conscious aspect of Hawthorne's writing will enable us to see the writer at work as nothing else would. It will enable us to move in that difficult region where the mind of the writer comes to grips with his themes and concerns and where the conscious theoretical intentions of the author dissolve and reshape themselves into literary attitudes and structures. We can watch the tale unfold itself on the page, and we can also, in Poe's words, "take a peep behind the scenes, ... at the wheels and pinions - the tackle for scene shifting, the step ladders and demon traps ....". 

In terms of Hawthornian preoccupations, our key term, self-consciousness, leads us to the two thematic centres around which Romantic thinking whirls: secularization of religion and expressionism. The secularization of
religion refers to the attempt by a number of romantic writers to find the source of religion within consciousness itself. In his *Natural Supernaturalism*, Abrams deals with the subject at length. "To put the matter with the sharpness of drastic simplification," writes Abrams, "faith in an apocalypse by revelation has been replaced by faith in an apocalypse by revolution, and this now gave way to faith in an apocalypse by imagination or cognition." ²

Leon Chai, who thinks of American Renaissance as "the final phase of Romanticism, embodying all the tensions and pressures incident to the culmination of the movement,"³ points out that the commitment to self-consciousness manifests itself in the Romantic approach to religion for it emerges from an atmosphere of deep scepticism engendered by Enlightenment's attack on the very foundations of religion. Against this scepticism, "it was necessary to find the source of religion within consciousness itself...to create out of epiphanic experience of consciousness a sense of the sublime and the infinite, a new content of religious awareness."⁴

The Romantic writers inevitably tried to reformulate the traditional concepts, schemes, and values which had been based on the relation of the
Creator to his creature and creation, within the prevailing two term intellectual system involving the subject and the object, ego and non-ego, the human mind or consciousness and its transactions with nature. As Abrams points out, this leads to the internalization of the Biblical framework through the transference of the theatre of events from outer earth and heaven to the spirit of single believer, in which "there enacts itself, metaphorically, the entire eschatological drama of the destruction of old creation, the union with Christ, and the emergence of a new creation..."5

The Hawthornian narrative focuses on the root concept of universal sin.6 In Christian thought universal sin has traditionally been defined in terms of pride and, therefore, seen as a rebellion against God and a violation of His creation. In Hawthorne, sin is seen as a rebellion or a violation of our common humanity. By shifting the focus from divine framework to human realities, Hawthorne seeks to secularize the Christian concept of original sin. In the Hawthornian narrative, though the question of sin inevitably points to the Biblical myth of the fall and the loss of Eden, Hawthorne himself was not a practising Christian.7 Nor was he seeking to justify the ways of god to men. Writes Henry James, "Nothing is more curious and interesting than this almost exclusively imported character of the sense of sin in Hawthorne's mind; it seems to exist there merely for an artistic or
literary purpose. He had ample cognizance of the Puritan conscience; it was his natural heritage; it was reproduced in him; looking into his soul, he found it there. But his relation to it was only, as one may say, intellectual; ...He played with it, and used it as a pigment; he treated it, as the metaphysicians say, objectively."

After accepting the Christian account of fallen man, Hawthorne devotes himself to world as it is here and now. Therefore, his concept of universal sin is at one level metaphysical and a temporal, but at another level it is deeply connected with both social processes and aesthetic processes. On the universal level, the concept acts as an a-priori assumption. It is abstract and desocialized. As a baseline of explanation, it excludes historical investigation and seems to render irrelevant empirical questions about who is actually doing what to whom and why. But on the other level, it can be seen as part of a strategy for dealing with and articulating the negative and problematic aspects of life in America in the nineteenth century. In his fiction, Hawthorne exploits fully the similarity between the original myth of Eden and the great American myth that inspired the American settlement and shaped the American identity. The similarity enables him to connect his discussion of the universal sinfulness of man with the currently prevalent social problems and evils. The two symbols, the cemetery and the prison, which Hawthorne habitually uses in his fiction, emphasize the dual
dimension of sin in his fiction. While the cemetery symbolizes the innate, inevitable limitation of man, the prison symbolizes the social and personal consequences of man's innate propensity for sin.

Expressionism, the other defining tendency of Romanticism, has been defined by Abrams as, "internal made external resulting from a creative process operating under the impulse of feeling, and embodying the combined product of the poet's perception, thoughts and feelings. The primary source and subject of a poem therefore, are the attributes and actions of the poet's own mind; or if aspects of the external world, then these only as they are converted from fact to poetry by the feelings and operations of the poet's mind... The paramount cause of poetry is not, as in Aristotle, a formal cause, determined primarily by the human actions and qualities imitated; nor, as in neo-classical criticism, a final cause, the effect intended upon audience; but instead an efficient cause - the impulse within the poet of feelings and desires seeking expression, or the compulsion of the 'creative' imagination which, like God the creator, has its internal source of motion."

Expressionism leads to Romantic concern with the nature of consciousness and an emphasis on subjectivity; to organicism and symbolism; to the
concept of imagination; to the emphasis on the autonomy of art and the idealization of the artist and an exploration of the creative process. In his efforts to present a self-reflexive analysis of the indignities and rewards of being an artist in the nineteenth century America, Hawthorne repeatedly engages with Expressionistic thought and practice, modifying them, when necessary, to suit his own purposes.\textsuperscript{11}

The self-conscious dimension of the major romances is worth exploring not only because of the insights it offers into Hawthorne's mind, but also because of the insights it offers into the evolution of the novel in general. "The production of narratives in a culture," as Jonathan Arac rightly points out, "may be seen not only as a function of other institutions and structures, but also as an institution that has an internal history of its own."\textsuperscript{12}

Narrative is old. In the western world, it is rooted in Homer and the Bible.\textsuperscript{13} They in turn draw upon older traditions. But the emergence of what we know as the novel has traditionally been linked with the rise of bourgeoisie in England. Arnold Kettle has pointed out, "The commercial bourgeoisie were revolutionaries against the feudal order because the feudal order denied them freedom. It denied them freedom physically, legally and spiritually to do what they wanted to do, to develop the way
The sixteenth and the seventeenth century were the critical period of transformation. But the victory of the Roundheads in the English Civil War signalled the fact that the bourgeoisie had won the struggle. By the turn of the century, the bourgeoisie was well and truly in the saddle and was free to develop in terms of its own inner compulsions.

It was at this historical moment that both America and novel were born. The bourgeois mind having won its battle on the religious, political, social and economic fronts was now seeking, to borrow Fiedler's phrase, "cultural autonomy". It was looking for a form that would mirror its own trials, tribulations and triumphs. The historical commission of the novel, therefore, right from the beginning was mimetic. The central purpose of this new art form was realistic representation.

The idea that the novel must give realistic imitation of the empirical world can be better grasped if we keep in mind the absolute commitment of the bourgeois to empiricism. In the final analysis what distinguishes the bourgeois from the aristocrats is this commitment to empiricism. The aristocrat had legitimized his dominant social position by appeals to non-empirical codes. The feudal social order, the emphasis on religion, the concept of the Chain of being, as also that of the divine right of kings were
all aspects of this non-empiricism. The bourgeois, on the other hand, whether he was buying or selling, or crossing oceans, or hoarding capital or conquering and exploiting the colonies, was committed to the five senses. This commitment eventually undermined the feudal world order. The series of events which include, the rise of the nation state, the renaissance, the reformation, colonialism, growth of parliamentary democracy, the civil war, the rise of prose and science, all constitute a complex chain of cause and effect. The underlying cause behind all these events, however, was the slow emergence of a new economic class with an empirical bent of mind, whose interests and world view conflicted directly with those of the existing dominant class, the aristocracy.

Empiricism also underlies the demand that the new art form, the novel, should give a realistic and objective representation, that it should provide credible, engaging imitation of the social, psychological, historical and moral experience of the emerging bourgeois world. From the beginning, therefore, the novel tried to marshal complex verbal devices to simulate realism, and to try and elicit in the mind of the reader the illusion of persons, places and events that are encountered in the external empirical world.

Underlying the attempt is what Abrams calls the mechanical theory of literary invention - the conscious attempt by philosophers and writers of
late 17th and 18th century to import into psychical realm the powerful explanatory framework of Newton's science of mechanics. This theory of literary invention, associated with the ideas of thinkers like Locke and Hume and Hartley, exercised decisive influence in shaping the form and the structure of the new literary form - the novel. Elementaristic in its method and empirical in its orientation, the theory assumes that all mental activity and even complex psychological states can be broken up into a limited number of simple components for they are essentially various combinations of the atoms of the mind. These basic elements or "ideas" were in turn thought to be fainter replicas of original perceptions of the senses. These images or ideas were said to move in a sequence across the mind's eye. Memory referred to the exact replication of the sense experiences, while Fancy or Imagination caused the images to recur in a different order. Thus, the imaginative process that lead to the creation of a whole invariably involved a division and combination of parts. The combination or the order could be new, but given the empirical emphasis, the parts could never be so. The ideas themselves were said to come together following the principles of Association - Resemblance, Contiguity in time or place, and Cause and Effect. These principles governed the sequence and conjunction of ideas, leading the mind, as it were, from one idea to another.
Abrams is right when he points out that in any period the theory of mind and the theory of art tend to be interdependent. In the eighteenth century it was John Locke, who building upon long tradition of mimesis, established the popular view of the mind as *tabula rasa* on which sensations write or paint or impress themselves. In this theory of literary invention, Newton's elementary particles of matter become unit ideas, while the motion of matter in space becomes the motion of ideas in sequence within the mind. The Newtonian concept of a force affecting the motion becomes the "uniting principle," and uniform laws of motion and gravitation are transformed into the "laws of association."

The form of the novel as it emerged at this time was obviously shaped by these ideas. Within the novel events were the basic units. Their arrangement in temporal sequence - what happens next - constituted the story, while the other aspects of the novel, characterization, setting and plot were obviously governed by resemblance, contiguity of time and place, and cause and effect respectively. Within the structure of the novel, these performed the same function as did the laws of association within the structure of the mind, that is, re-combine the basic units, "events", into new wholes on the basis of associative connections. And because the structure of the novel paralleled the structure of the mind, just as the mind mirrored the world, so did the novel, in its entirety, mirror the emerging bourgeois world.
In his book, *Partial Magic: The Novel as a Self-conscious Genre*, Robert Alter points out that mimesis is never a direct reproduction of reality but rather a way of eliciting in the mind of the reader - through complex chains of verbal indicators - the illusion of persons, places, situations, events and institutions convincingly, like the ones we encounter outside the sphere of reading. All novels are necessarily mimetic but according to Alter,

"a self-conscious novel is one that systematically flaunts its own necessary condition of artifice, and that by so doing probes into the problematic relationship between self-seeming artifice and reality... the self-conscious novelist is acutely aware that he is manipulating schemata, devising ingenious cryptograms, and he constantly invents narrative strategies for sharing the awareness with us, so that he simultaneously, or alternately, creates the illusion of reality and shatters it. The realistic novel, by contrast, seeks to maintain a relatively consistent illusion of reality. Thus Richardson's epistolary novels, with their pseudo-documentary form, clearly contribute to the establishment of a realist tradition, while Fielding's novels, with their flaunted contrivances of plot and nomenclature, their coyly obtrusive narrators, their discursive explorations of the theory of fiction, are eminently self-conscious."
Alter goes on to suggest that the entire history of the novel may be thought of as a dialectic between the self-conscious and the realistic tradition.

Are there a set of narrative techniques which an explicitly self-conscious novelist employs to dramatize the process of the narrative's own composition? Since the self-conscious novelist seeks to represent the tension between artifice and that which disrupts artifice, the act of storytelling is deliberately problematized through the use of transparently dramatized narrators, implied authors often engaged in acts of composition themselves, deliberate reminders of authorial function by the direct invocation of the reader as reader or by a complex manipulation of succession of narrators or narrative points of view. In terms of style of writing, the self-conscious novelist often emphasizes the artificiality of the language, and in terms of plot and structure, he would disrupt reality so as to assert the mediating spirit of the novelist. The structure of the novel would often draw attention to itself so that it can metonymically represent the novel's own principles of organization. Some of the characters in a self-conscious novels are deliberately dehumanized by making them allegorical or presenting them as clearly fictional entities. Because it seeks to acknowledge its own mimetic falsity - images of mirrors and reflexive
surfaces tend to dominate. In his fiction Hawthorne uses all these devises, and many others as well. But as we shall see at the end of the second chapter, in the final analysis, Hawthorne's self-consciousness is to be understood neither in terms of "mimetic" poetics nor "constitutive" poetics, but what can be aptly described as "transformative" poetics.

II

Hawthorne's term for the form in which he wrote was romance. A close look at the distinction which he habitually draws between the "novel" and the "romance" will make it abundantly clear that Hawthorne deliberately sets out to be a "self-conscious" writer.

When a writer calls his work Romance, it need hardly be observed that he wishes to claim a certain latitude, both as to its fashion and material, which he would not have felt himself entitled to assume, had he professed to be writing a Novel. The latter form of composition is presumed to aim at a very minute fidelity, not merely to the possible, but to the probable and ordinary course of man's experience. The former - while, as a work of art, it must rigidly subject itself to laws, and while it sins unpardonably, so far it may swerve aside from the truth of
the human heart - has fairly a right to present the truth under circumstances, to a great extent, of the writer's own choosing or creation... He will be wise, no doubt, to make a very moderate use of the privileges here stated, and especially, to mingle the Marvellous, rather as a slight, delicate, and evanescent flavour, than as any portion of the actual substance of the dish offered to the Public. He can hardly be said, however, to commit a literary crime, even if he disregard this caution.20

According to Hawthorne, the novel is committed to mimesis. Both in term of form and content, it provides a realistic imitation of the "ordinary course of man's experience." This phrase makes it clear that the novelist's subject matter lies in the external world of day-to-day realities. Romance too upholds the truth - but the truth is not ordinary. It belongs not to the external world, but to the internal world of human heart, and the form in which this truth is embodied is not derived from the external world, but is created by the writer's own subjective mind ("own choosing and creation"). The ideal strategy for the romance writer, Hawthorne goes on to say, is not to discard the realistic conventions altogether but mingle with them the "Marvellous". In short, the romance writer starts with the novel form which is designed to imitate the external reality, but since his essential concern is not the imitation of external reality but the expression of his own
subjectivity, he takes liberties with the form and creates a new genre to suit his own needs - the romance.

Hawthorne often writes as if he invented the form of romance. Considering the long tradition of romance writing, perhaps it would be more accurate to say that he rediscovered it or readapted an older form to suit his own purposes. Feidler is right when he points out that the American novel is only finally American, and that it remains an event in the history of the European spirit as indeed is the very invention of America itself. "To write... about American novel is to write about the fate of certain European genres in a world of alien experience. It is not only a world where courtship and marriage have suffered a profound change, but also one in the process of losing the traditional distinctions of class; a world without a significant history or a substantial past; a world which had left behind the terror of Europe not for the innocence that it dreamed of but for new and special guilts associated with the rape of nature and the exploitation of dark-skinned people; a world doomed to play out the imaginary childhood of Europe."23

However, Hawthorne's adaptation of the older form to suit his own purposes has to be understood in terms of national - and nationalistic - American literary history. The evolution of the rise of the this self-
conscious form of fiction is inextricably linked with the emergence of a self-conscious nationalism in America in the early 19th century. Undoubtedly, both the form and content of the 19th century texts were shaped by the nationalistic mission the authors felt themselves to be addressing.

From the very beginning, Americans sought to define themselves in opposition to the older European civilization. For the Puritan forefathers, the American settlement meant a chance to go back to the very beginnings and start the cycle of human history afresh. Later generations inherited a corrupted version of the dream, and the idea of the messianic American, either as the self-reliant captain of Capitalism or a new democratic Man, continued to exercise its hold on the national imagination and shape America's understanding of itself. By the nineteenth century Americans desperately wanted to see their national independence reflected in a distinctively American literature which could compare with the literary products of the older civilization, and Hawthorne's self-reflexivity has to be seen in terms of the circumstances of the age in which he was writing.

It was during the nineteenth century that American democracy and economy came of age. The economic revolution that transformed United States from an agrarian society to a commercial one proceeded at its most
rapid pace during the years in which the classic works of American literature were being written. Statistics reveal the scale and the rapidity of the transformation. Between 1820 and 1860 the population grew from about 10 million to almost 32 million, while the proportion of Americans living in cities rose 8000 per cent; railroad mileage went from zero to over thirty thousand, and there was five fold increase in the number of banks and of notes in circulation. Writing and Publishing developed along the same lines as the economy. Before 1820, in a vast underdeveloped continent, books were difficult to produce and distribute. They remained an upper class pursuit and both the author and the audience were bound together by shared interests and knowledge. But in the next three decades all this was changed, changed utterly. Technological advances speeded up the printing process so that it was possible to bring out larger editions at lower costs. Railroad helped to bridge the vast distances, and the increase in population and literacy provided a ready demand for books. By 1850, 90 per cent of the adult population could read and write and the U.S. boasted the largest reading public in the history of the English language.24

The economic revolution was accompanied by wide ranging social changes. On the one hand, the increasingly prosperous middle class sought to protect its interests by arming itself with a domestic ideology which glorified the angelic woman as the centre of the household, while the
entrepreneurial man went out and conquered the world. On the other hand, those unfairly exploited by the system sought to organize themselves to fight for their rights. 1831 saw the establishment of the New England Anti-Slavery Society. Two years later, American Anti-Slavery society was incorporated. In 1848, just two year before the publication of The Scarlet Letter, the convention in Seneca Fall, New York, marked the beginning of the political organisation of women in their own behalf.

In this rapidly changing society the role of the artist was seen to be specially problematic. On the one hand, the growing pride in the nation led to the demand for autonomous literature. Thus Emerson in “The American Scholar” announced, "Our day of dependence, our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands, draws to a close. The millions that around us are rushing into life, cannot always be fed on the mere remains of foreign harvests. Events, actions arise, that must be sung, that will sing themselves."25 On the other hand, the growing commercial society combined the ancient Puritan distrust of art with an emphasis on practicality and utility that left no respectable place for the artist. In “The Custom House” Hawthorne has described in detail the difficulties of the artist caught between the Puritan forefathers and the indifferent buyers and sellers of his own age. In such a situation, with no established tradition to fall back on, it was left to each individual writer to work out for himself his
own views of his chosen vocation. Hawthorne and the other nineteenth century American writers sought to do this by repeatedly applying themselves to the theme of the artist in their writings.

All the other "major" prose writers of the romantic age in America - Poe, Emerson, Thoreau and Melville - were also interested in contemporary efforts to define nature significance of the artist and his activities. Poe addressed himself to the problem of the artist in the essay "The Philosophy of Literary Composition". Emerson, who helped to set the tone of the period by adapting European romanticism for local consumption, repeatedly returned to the subject of the artist in his discourses and essays. In "The American Scholar", "Self-Reliance" and "Poet", he tried to articulate a coherent program for the nineteenth century American artist. Melville, like Hawthorne, applied himself to the problem in discursive essays as well as in his fiction. In "Hawthorne and his Mosses" Melville develops his own theory of literature as subterfuge. In the essay, he proclaims the master genius of an American, celebrates it not for the author's sake but for the sake of the nation. But he eventually advocates anonymity and even alienation as the only course available to the exceptional writer. In Moby Dick, Melville's subject is not just the manufacture and the sale of sperm oil. It is also the creation of literary text. Just as the sailors change the whale to oil, so Ishmail proposes to transform
the real whale into the stuff of fiction. Thus he repeatedly draws attention to the labour involved in making literature out of whales and as Gilmore has remarked "the visibility of its making is one of the most arresting features of Moby Dick as an aesthetic performance." The same point can be made of Walden as well. In Walden, Thoreau devotes an exclusive chapter to reading and in the chapter "Beanfields" metaphorically writes about the composition of the text itself. But more than any of his contemporaries, it was Hawthorne who was interested in the artist-figure. He applies himself to issues relating to the artist not only in his prefaces, but also in his fiction through the device of the artist-figure.

The artist appears in major and minor roles throughout Hawthorne's works also. Millicent Bell in Hawthorne's View of the Artist has given an inventory of the major artist characters in his fiction. The fact, however, is that even the non-artists in his fiction display an unmistakable relationship to his artists. Characters like Rappacini, Fanshawe, Dimmesdale, Hester, could all be described as "refractions of the artistic nature" (Mattheisen's phrase). The non-artist in his fiction inevitably possess some aspect of the artist's personality, and they inevitably face situations and crises which seem a metaphorical rendering of the artist's situation as perceived by Hawthorne. In this study we will concentrate on Hawthorne's use of the artist figure in his romances to highlight their self-consciousness.
The repeated use of the artist figure leads to self-consciousness because Hawthorne's delineation of the artist's character and situation are necessarily based on his awareness of the processes of art and on his own experiences as an American novelist writing in the first half of the nineteenth century. His fictional artists in their fictional world inevitably grapple with the questions which preoccupied Hawthorne as well: How is an artist to apprehend or perceive the universe? How is he to relate to nature in general and to his immediate surroundings in particular? What is a work of art and what constitutes its worth? What are the difficulties involved in its creation, and how are they to be overcome? What is the artist's obligation to society and what is the nature of society's obligation to him? How is he to relate to his audience? What kind of effect should he strive for? Finally, is he himself a noble or an ignoble creature? What constitutes success for him and what is failure? In their actions and reactions relating to Nature, society, their work and their audience, the fictional artists inevitably reflect the answers Hawthorne has arrived at to these fundamental questions. By repeatedly telling us the story of the artist and his efforts to create works of art, Hawthorne engages us in consideration of a larger subject the nature of mental activities through which art comes into being. In the process his medium becomes a record of his own adventures.
In *The School of Hawthorne*, Brodhead not only traces the influence of Hawthorne on writers like Melville and Henry James, but also makes the telling point that the literary history of Hawthorne's tradition is inseparable from the history of how literature has been organized as a cultural system in the United States. In modern times, ever since the publication of *The American Novel and Its Tradition*, in 1957, American literary studies has been chasing romance in a big way. Continuing the work of canon formation begun by earlier critics, like F.O. Matthiesen, Feidelson, RWB Lewis and Lionel Trilling in this book, Richard Chase builds upon the emphatic opposition set up by Hawthorne between the novel and the romance, insisting that the latter was a specifically American genre encoding the distinctive features of the new socio-political and cultural entity known as the United States.

Chase helped establish what later came to be known as the "Romance Theory" of American Literature. Under its influence, perhaps a majority of critics for more than a generation agreed that the American novel of the nineteenth century, because it had the form of Romance, was very different from its European counterpart. In its most influential version, the theory maintained that the formal difference arose from a difference in concern.
The European novel was absorbed with society. In contrast, the American romance, took the human condition as its subject, and tried to articulate truths about human nature. The novel was empirical and realistic; the romance metaphysical and often fantastic. The novel was substantial and concrete, rich in social detail; the romance, less caught up by society, was more abstract, more profound. Because literature invariably refers back to social conditions that nurture it, the explanation for the difference between the novel and the romance was sought in the respective societies that nurtured the two forms. America, it was claimed, was exceptional among the nations of the West for while European society was class based and divided by class conflict, America, knit by consensus and relatively classless, offered little to the social observer. Its social texture was thin, but to the extent that class and cultural struggle had been avoided, it was happily and harmoniously thin. Precisely because of this, the American novelists looked beyond society to existential situations of metaphysical import.

From the seventies onwards, however, a group of critics set themselves the task of re-examining the central assumptions of Romance theory. The New Americanists believed that the earlier critics under the influence of the romance theory did not do justice to the ways in which American literary texts mediated social reality. The New Americanists argued that the
theoretical premises as well as the critical practice of the older critics encouraged the aesthetic separation of the autonomous literary text from the social processes of the real world, and that they helped set up a narrow canon which included only white males, while systematically excluding African American writers, women writers and writers of popular sentimental fiction.

Frederick Crews, who coined the phrase New Americanists, in a review article attempts to describe the differences between the New and the Old Americanists.

What gives the New Americanist critique a special emotional force... is its connection both to our historic national shames - slavery, 'Indian removal', aggressive expansion, imperialism, and so forth - and to current struggles for equal social opportunity. When a New Americanist shows, for example, that a canonical work such as Huckleberry Finn indulges in stereotypical 'objectifying' of blacks, Native Americans, women or others, a double effect results. First, the canon begins to look less sacrosanct and is thus ready for expansion to include works by long dead representatives of those same groups. Second, their contemporary descendants are offered a reason for entering into an academic dialogue that had previously slighted them. In short,
the New Americanist program aims at altering the literary departments' social makeup as well as their dominant style of criticism.30

In recent times, however, the wheel has come a full circle, and critics have begun to wonder whether the assumptions of the New Americanists and the older Romance critics concerning the relationship between cultural and historical contexts and literary works are in fact radically different from one another. David Levin, for example, accuses Crews for endorsing what he calls an oversimplified narrative consisting of simple declarations based on evidence that has not been appropriately studied. With compelling citations he demonstrates that the old Americanist did not ever seek to eliminate from their textual analysis the social, political and economic determinants, nor did they believe that Literature could be studied profitably without taking into account the social processes. Levin demonstrates that the older critics did not ignore issues likes racism, sexism and class nor did they try to conceal the ideological assumptions of the authors they wrote about or themselves.

Levin concedes that New Americanists and their contemporary descendants, the New Historicists such as Jonathan Arac, Reynold and others, explore in vivid detail the cultural contexts that seem to impinge
upon the texts they are interpreting. "The issue," as Levin points out, "concerning these new critical voices and the older ones that they oppose is not whether contemporary literary critics might not find new things to say about old texts or new things to say about new texts. Literary criticism as a profession could not proceed in the absence of the belief that interpretation will never exhaust the canon. The question, rather, is whether the newness of their saying is as radical and theoretical a break from old ways of saying things as the New Americanists claim and whether New Americanist interpretation disqualifies earlier interpretation."  

The issue, in other words, is whether the assumptions of the New Americanists and the romance theorists concerning the relationship between cultural, historical context and the literary work are, in fact, radically different and whether the romance theorist in any way deny the relationship, upon which the New Americanists insist, between ideology and literary criticism.

The New Americanist claim that the Romance critics ignored ideology and relocated texts outside the socio-political and economic world does not accurately reflect the differences between Old and New Americanists. But it does serve to distract us from a genuine distinction that needs to be drawn not so much as between Old Americanism and New, as between Old
American Nationalism grounded in exceptionalism to an equally old tradition of American nationalism that has been seeking to lay down the ground rules for a genuinely multicultural society. The former rooted in Biblical exclusivism has produced an ongoing history of racial and religious prejudice, and a literary canon that includes only white Christian males, while the latter, rooted in Humanism, in the most inclusive sense of the word, produced the Declaration of Independence.

In an impressive review article, Eric Cheyfitz analyses the writings of three major Hawthorne critics; Matthiessen, Bercovitch and Berlant and demonstrates how they deliberately overlook or underplay Hawthorne's reprehensible attitude to slavery in an effort to reinforce his canonical status. Eric Cheyfitz finds the process of canonization objectionable, because he sees it linked with nationalization, "both of which are constituted by the process of fetishization."

Fetishization, like the hysteria of patriotism naturalizes what is only a figure in order to project what is partial into a whole, a universal. While I can imagine a strategic or practical, nationalism that does not involve itself with processes of canonization and fetishization, the rhetoric of American exceptionalism, which represents a political entity, the US as a universal ideal, "America" typifies the process of Fetishization.
that I find operating in the critical works under discussion, though in varying degrees of doubt, as they go about the work of reconstructing Hawthorne as a canonical figure suitable for a progressive ideology.\textsuperscript{32}

Inevitably, the canonical critics emphasize Hawthorne's narrative craft, his rich ambiguities, his subtle treatment of American history while the non-canonical critics vehemently point out that narrative subtleties are designed to conceal his anti-Semitism gender biases and his racial prejudice.

So let's decide once and for all for ourselves, was our author a racist, or not? He was. He supported and wrote the campaign biography of Pierce, who became the President on the platform of the finality of the Compromise of 1850, and who promised to preserve the Union by keeping slavery out of politics. He disliked the abolitionist, repeatedly described the devil as black and deliberately avoided the issue of slavery in his romances despite the fact that they often dealt with the theme of psychological domination.\textsuperscript{33}

Was he not anti-Semitic? He was. Consider the entry from The English Notebooks in which Hawthorne describes a Jewish couple he met in London:

\begin{quote}
My eyes were mostly drawn to a young lady who sat nearly
\end{quote}
opposite me, across the table... I should never have thought of touching her, nor desired to touch her; for, whether owing to distinctness of race, my sense that she was a Jewess, or whatever else, I felt a sort of repugnance, simultaneously with my perception that she was an admirable creature... But at the right hand of this miraculous Jewess, there sat the very Jew of Jews; the distilled essence of all the Jews that have been since Jacob's time; he was Judas Iscariot; he was the Wandering Jew; he was the worst, and at the same time, the truest type of his race, and contained within himself, I have no doubt, every prophet and every Cloathsman, that ever the tribe produced; and he must have been circumcised as much as ten times over. I never beheld anything so ugly and disagreeable, and preposterous, and laughable, as the outline of his profile; it was so hideously Jewish, and so cruel, and so keen... and yet his manner and aspect, in spite of all, were those of a man of the world, and a gentleman. Well; it is hard to give an idea of this ugly Jew, as of the beautiful Jewess.34

Was he for the emancipation of women? No, he wasn't. Being a friend of Margaret Fuller and brother-in-law of Elizabeth Peabody, there is little doubt that he was entirely familiar with the feminist arguments being articulated in his time for the emancipation of women. Although his
romances express a certain admiration for the strong women, he never really retracted from his position on this subject expressed in the Mrs. Hutchinson sketch in which he condemns the "false liberality, which mistakes the strong division-lines of Nature for mere arbitrary distinctions." Thought he warns us that strong traits of his grim Puritan ancestors were intermingled in his character, it still comes as a shock to learn from a recently published biography of his youngest daughter Rose that he actually forbade her from writing fiction when she was ten years old.

There is no doubt about the fact that in the last few years, with non-canonical critics emphasizing these negative aspects of Hawthorne's personality and art, Hawthorne has begun to lose his central position in the American canon. The 1995 edition of American Literary Scholarship listed not a single full length study of our author. The Fall 1997 edition of Nathaniel Hawthorne Review, in its listing of current Hawthorne Bibliography mentions one study published in the German Language and two books for young adults - one a selection of twenty excerpted essays, the other a simplified biography. This is a far cry from the 80s when every year saw the publication of at least three to four full length studies of Hawthorne.
From our point of view, however, Hawthorne continues to occupy the central place in American literary tradition not in spite of but because of his limitations. The presence of these so called "reprehensible" traits, in fact, makes Hawthorne more "representative" rather than otherwise. American critics seemingly forget that Hawthorne did not invent anti-Semitism, racism and bigotry, jingoistic nationalism or for that matter the idea of the canon. The exclusivism that prompts these is grounded in the Book of books, the Bible and have been part and parcel of Christian Europe's cultural past for centuries, and despite all the talk of new beginnings they did shape American realities, including literary texts and critical responses.37

D.H. Lawrence in his influential Studies in Classic American Literature (1923) suggests that one could and should separate the teller and the tale in the American context for they tend to move in opposite directions, and once having separated them, one should trust the tale and not the teller. "The proper function of a critic is to save the tale from the artist who created it."38

It is my contention that to a large extent, Hawthorne's romances are able to save themselves because of their self-conscious dimension. By committing himself to the telling of not just the story, but also of all that goes into the creation of his romances, Hawthorne ensures that his texts are not mere
vehicles for dogmatic assertions of personal belief or triumphant expression of personality. Rather, they emerge as a testing ground of both belief and personality, a record of an intense self-conscious re-examination of the author's relationship with himself and his culture. A self-scrutinizing strategy to secure self-foundation, Hawthorne's self-consciousness is grounded as much in self-awareness as in self-distrust, as much in his alienation as in his presence; as much in his desire for concealment as in his self-expression. Kenneth Dauber suggests that it is in the difficulties that Hawthorne raises about the existence of the self in community, about the differences between reality and dream or the self and the other that "Hawthorne exists". "It is as responsible for how he appears that he would be read. Or better, if he appears to conceal himself in the face he puts on, then as one declaring his concealment exactly, he takes responsibility all the more."39 As Yeats, another self-conscious writer, points out, wars - and for that matter, civil wars - are not just fought on the battlefields, and that the cross is not always out there on the wall.

Hawthorne's four major romances are all of a piece, existing on two levels simultaneously. On the more obvious level, the romances deal with the with the theme of universal sin. They are concerned with the predicament of man in face of the reality of sin. In the fiction of Hawthorne, the one truth available to fallen man is the reality of universal sin. But his characters out of cowardice or pride find it difficult to come to terms with
this harsh reality about themselves. They spend considerable energy and ingenuity in evading or suppressing this fact about themselves. But reality by its very definition cannot be suppressed or evaded. And since the self necessarily evolves in and through consciousness, the inability to face up to the fundamental truth about himself and the world necessarily leads to falsehood and problems. When the reality of sin is not given its due recognition in the conscious designs of man, it goes "underground" and working at a hidden level, it digs, as Coverdale discovers in The Blithedale Romance, "a by way to pit from the very gates of heaven." At this level, Hawthorne's major concern is to bring to light the hidden workings of evil. He carefully examines the "cavern of the human heart," "the spring and motives of individuals," the past heritage and the contemporary realities of America, in order to show how the deepest taint of sin might be found even in the most sacred quality of human life, working such effects that the world is only the darker for its beauty.

At the deeper, more complex level, Hawthorne's romances explore the predicament of the artist and the problems that he faces in trying to cope with peculiar demands of his profession in a sinful world. The two levels mirror each other and in doing so they a self-consciously reflect all that has gone into their own creation. Hawthorne's ideas are obviously rooted in Calvinistic Puritanism as well as Romantic thought, but as we shall see he adapted both to suit his own particular needs.
NOTES


4 Chai 10.

5 Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism* 47.

6 See Randal Stewart. *American Literature and Christian Doctrine* (Yale Univ. Press, 1951) Stewart lists what he considers the essential features of Christian orthodoxy, that is, assumptions shared by all Christian sects. According to him, these are: 1) The sovereignty of God (God is infinitely wise, powerful, loving and just, and is truly sovereign in His world). 2) The divinity of Christ (Jesus is the only begotten son of God). 3) Original Sin (the natural man is imperfect, fallible, prone to evil). 4) Atonement (natural man is redeemed through faith in the efficacy of Christ's atoning death). 5) The inspiration of the Scriptures - (the Bible is the revealed word of God). Among the five the chief test for Christian Orthodoxy remains for him, belief in the concept of Original Sin.

7 See L.J. Fick, *The Light Beyond: A Study of Hawthorne's Theology* (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1955) 155 -165. Brought up as a Unitarian, Hawthorne referred to himself as a Protestant. However, he was nondenominational. He disliked going to the Church and made a point of not attending Sunday services. But he remained a life long reader of the Bible, making extensive use of it in his works.


9 See Sacvan Bercovitch, "The Biblical Basis of the American Myth" in *The Bible and American Arts and Letters* ed. Giles Gunn (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1995). Bercovitch argues that the Puritan legacy has given America its basic mode of national self-definition: to be an American is to discover oneself by prophecy. He points out that from the time of the Puritan forefathers, Americans have sought to convert the Old Testament and New Testament to a kind of National Testament, transforming the
history of salvation into the American salvation of history by projecting America as the fulfilment and the realization of the biblical promise.


16 See Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp* 156-177, for a detailed discussion of the mechanical theory of literary invention. Abrams' field of reference is generally poetry, and in his discussion he does not emphasize, as I have done here, the linkage between the essentials of the mechanical theory of literary invention and the very structure of the emerging new form, the novel. I have done this because in choosing to write "romances" rather than "novel," Hawthorne is rejecting not just a particular literary form, but also the mode of perception that underlies its creation.


21 See Nina Baym, “Concepts of Romance in Hawthorne's America” in *Nineteenth Century Fiction* 38, 1984, 426-43. Baym argues that Hawthorne's distinction between the novel and the romance “was idiosyncratic, his own.”

22 See Emily Miller Buddick, *Nineteenth Century American Romance: Genre and the Construction of Democratic Culture* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996) 2. According to Buddick, American Romances manifest affinity with the different British and European literary traditions from which they derive, namely the classic epic (The Iliad and the Odyssey of Homer and the Aeneid of Virgil), as well as the epic romance, the quest romance, the medieval romance and Arthurian romance; and such texts as Sir Gawain and the Green Knight(1375-1400 author unknown) Sir Thomas Mallory *Morte D'arthur*(1485) and Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* (1590, 1593) and Edmund Spenser's *Fairie Queen* (1590).


26 Gilmore 119-120.

27 Millicent Bell, *Hawthorne's View of the Artist* (New York: State Univ. of New York, 1962), preface IX.


31 David Levin in *American Literary History*, 6.3 (Fall 1994) : 527.


33 See Jennifer Fleischner, "Hawthorne and the Politics of Slavery" in *Studies in the Novel*, 23( Spring 91) : 96-105.


35 Hawthorne, *Tales and Sketches* 18.

See Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: Bible and Literature*, (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1983). Frye contrasts the monotheism of the Bible with the imperial monotheism in Egypt, Rome and Persia. These, though they believed in their own deities, did not question the reality of the gods of others. “But the Israelites,” writes Frye, made their great contribution to history, as is the wont of human nature, through their least amiable characteristic. It was not their belief that their God was true God, but their belief that all other Gods were false that proved decisive"(114). With this exclusivism comes the dialectical habit of mind, “that divides the world into those with us and those against us.” and the general feeling, “that nothing will grow right until the entire world is united in the right beliefs” as well as the main “historical preoccupation of both Judaism and Christianity... with the expectation of a *culbute generale* in the future, a kind of recognition scene when those with the right beliefs or attitudes will be rewarded, while all the others would be punished"(115).

Lawrence 8.


Hawthorne, *Novels* 844.