Chapter 3

Essential Traits

From the introverted child dependent on the generosity of his relatives, to the self-confident U.S. Consul in Liverpool; from the young man who early in life decided to be an author, to the father who forbade his daughter to write fiction; from the obscurest man of letters, to the most celebrated one even in his own lifetime - there is little doubt that Hawthorne was continually changing and evolving. Yet the changes did not involve contrariety. Rather they represent expansion, as it were, in concentric circles, a fulfilment as time went on, of the promises of the beginnings. Hawthorne himself describes the process in the Preface to *The Snow-Image*: "In youth men are apt to write more wisely than they really know or feel; and the remainder of life may be not idly spent in realizing and convincing themselves of the wisdom which they uttered long ago. The truth that was only in fancy then may have since become a substance in mind and heart."¹ In this chapter, after a brief survey of Hawthorne's career, I will outline the conceptual framework underlying Hawthorne's romances.

I

Hawthorne was born on July fourth, 1804, in Salem, Massachusetts, into a prominent New England family which could trace its ancestry back to the
seventeenth century. When Nathaniel was four years old, his sea-captain father died at Surinam and Nathaniel and his two sisters, grew up supported by his maternal relations. From 1821 to 1825, Hawthorne attended Bowdoin College, along with Longfellow, who went on to become the most popular poet of his generation and Franklin Pierce, who was the President of the United States from 1821-1825. By 1821, Hawthorne seems to have decided that he wanted to be a writer. In a letter to his mother he outlines his career plans: "What do you think of my becoming an Author, and relying for support upon my pen? Indeed I think the illegibility of my handwriting is very author like. How proud you would feel to see my works praised by the reviewers, as equal to the proudest productions of the scribbling sons of John Bull."  

After his graduation in 1825, Hawthorne returned to Salem. He lived with his mother and for the next 12 years devoted himself to full-time writing. In 1828, he published a short novel Fanshawe - a gothic tale with an ineffective American hero. Hawthorne soon came to realize the novel was a failure and took considerable pains to withdraw all the published copies from circulation. During these years, Hawthorne concentrated on writing tales and sketches many of which were published anonymously in Samuel G. Goodrich's The Token, an annual Boston publication. During this period Hawthorne planned three book length collections, but was unable to find a
publisher to publish them. It was only in 1837, that Hawthorne was able to bring out his first volume *Twice Told Tales* which received good reviews, notably from Longfellow and Poe, but had moderate sales. In his letter thanking Longfellow for his favourable review, Hawthorne described his existence during these years:

> By some witchcraft or other - for I really cannot assign any reason why and wherefore - I have been carried apart from the main current of life, and find it impossible to get back again. Since we last met ... I have secluded myself from society; and yet I never meant any such thing, nor dreamed what sort of life I was going to lead. I have made a captive of myself and put me into a dungeon; and now I cannot find the key to let myself out - and if the door were open, I should almost be afraid to come out... For the last ten years, I have not lived, but only dreamed of living.5

In 1839, Hawthorne became engaged to Sophia.6 Because his writing could not support a family, he worked from 1839 to 1840 at the Boston Custom House. Between 1840 to 1841 he wrote three small volumes of children history: *Grandfather’s Chair*, *Famous Old People* and *The Library Tree*. In 1842, he wrote another volume - *Biographical Stories for Children*. In 1841, Hawthorne joined the transcendentalist utopian community at
Brooke Farm. Later he drew upon the Brooke Farm experience in the writing of *The Blithedale Romance*. In 1842, Hawthorne brought out an expanded version of the *Twice Told Tales*.

After marrying Sophia in 1842, Hawthorne moved into Old Manse at Concord, and lived there for three years, writing many of the tales which were collected into another volume of short fiction in 1846 - *Mosses from Old Manse*. A family man now, Hawthorne was still unable to make a living of his writing and from 1846 to 1849 he worked as the Surveyor of Customs at Salem. Since this was a political appointment, Hawthorne was unceremoniously dumped, when the Whigs defeated the Democrats in 1848. At this point, without a settled means of income and shattered by the death of his mother, Hawthorne wrote *The Scarlet Letter*. The book marked a turning point in Hawthorne's career, for in writing it, Hawthorne was able to weave together into one coherent, emotionally satisfying and intellectually consistent pattern or framework, the ideas and motifs he had been working with in the tales. It will be my effort in this chapter to outline this framework, for it shaped the other three romances that he wrote later.

Published in March 1850, *The Scarlet Letter* was a success, and it established Hawthorne’s literary reputation. In the next few years Hawthorne set himself a frenetic pace. By 1852 he had produced the
House of the Seven Gables and The Blithedale Romance. There were also works for children. In 1851, he brought out a revised version of children’s history earlier published in 1840-42 and also a new book on mythology for young readers A Wonder Book for Girls and Boys and Tanglewood Tales for Girls and Boys in 1853. Twice Told Tales was reissued in 1851 and another collection of stories published in 1852 -The Snow Image and Other Twice Told Tales. The same year saw Hawthorne also writing the campaign Biography of his school friend Franklin Pierce, who went on to become the President of United States in 1852. Pierce rewarded his friend by appointing him American consul at Liverpool. Hawthorne worked for four years at Liverpool and after that spent two years in Italy, living in Rome and Florence. In 1860 he published his last romance, The Marble Faun, set in Italy. After the publication of the book, Hawthorne returned to the United States, setting up residence at the Wayside in Concord. In 1863 he published his last book Our Old Home based on his notebooks and presenting his observation of the way of life in England. He died in 1864, struggling in the last few years to put together a Romance. His unfinished manuscripts were published posthumously as Septimus Felton; or the Elixir of Life (1872), The Dolliver’s Romance (1876), Dr. Grimshaw’s Secret.  

Nina Baym, in The Shape of Hawthorne’s Career, finds a “controlling preoccupation” through all of Hawthorne’s career, “with way of writing
that could embody the imagination and justify it to a sceptical, practical minded audience.” She divides his career into three phases: a prolonged early phase (1825-1849), during which he worked under the influence of common sense attitude about imagination; the major phase (1850-59) in which he put forward a more aggressive position clearly linked to English romanticism; and finally the last phase (1860-1865) when he wavered between return to earlier modes and push towards literary realism.\(^8\) Alison Easton, in The Making of the Hawthorne Subject, focuses on the probable date of composition of more than 125 tales up till the publication of The Scarlet Letter. She establishes six sequential phases of his literary career before 1849. In phases three to six, that leads up to the period of the creation of the great romances, Easton too sees Hawthorne reacting against the hard-headedness of Scottish Common Sense philosophers on the one hand and Romantic idealism on the other, while gradually warming to Adam Smith’s influential Theory of Moral Sentiments. According to Easton it was Smith’s influence that shaped Hawthorne’s “concern with the sympathetic imagination in the representation of the human subject” as the only way of accommodating the “gap between the psychic self and existence within the social order.”\(^9\) From the Concord period on, as Easton shows, the concept of sympathetic imagination becomes crucial for Hawthorne in his attempts to test notions of self, self-reliance and self-definitions through his characters in an ongoing effort to consolidate the
definition of the human subject in the precarious context of his society's 'anxieties about self-definition' and "selfhood". For both Easton and Baym, The Scarlet Letter marked a break through in Hawthorne's growth as a writer.

II

It is Hawthorne's lifelong preoccupation with the question of universal sin that ensures that his writings seem of a piece reflecting a single literary sensibility. This literary sensibility, first of all, leads us to the romantic appropriation of the Bible. In his book, Origins of Narrative, Pricket focuses on Jacob's appropriation of Easu's blessing, and uses it as a metaphor to tell the story of various appropriations and the role they have played in shaping the Bible and, therefore, the western culture. He takes us through the Israelis appropriation of elements of Pagan cultures, Christianity appropriation of Hebrew Bible and finally the Romantic appropriation of the theological Bible. He points out that at the end of the 18th century, even while Church attendance declined, the prestige of the Bible as a literary and aesthetic model rose to new heights. He also points out the that the idea of the Bible presenting a novel like narrative with character, motivation and plot is like the idea of the novel itself, no older than the 18th century. Concerning himself with the question, "why was the Romantic fascination with the evolution of the self-consciousness linked
with notions of the origins of Bible?" and "how far the creativity and vitality of our literary tradition is related to its Biblical origins?" He sees not just Romantic thought, but also Romantic criticism with its accompanying concept of "literature" and even the theory of hermeneutics as being biblically derived. "The Romantic Bible was at once a single narrative work, an ongoing tradition of interpretation, and what I have called in these pages a 'metatype': a kind of all embracing literary form that was invoked to encompass and give meaning to all other books." 10

On his part, Hawthorne certainly knew his Bible. He belonged to a period when Bible was assigned primary importance. Admission requirements for Bowdoin college included translation from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, and the Bowdoin curriculum included regular Bible study.11 Hawthorne's publisher Field records in his memoirs, "Hawthorne was a diligent reader of the Bible and when in my ignorant way, I would question the use of a word, he would almost always refer me to the Bible as his authority."12

In his fiction, however, Hawthorne deliberately and self-consciously attempts to appropriate and tailor the traditional Christian concept of universal sin for the modern reader rooted in the post enlightenment commitment to reason and to a particular understanding of the human mind
and its functions. Milton's opening lines of *Paradise Lost* capture the essence of the widely accepted Puritan understanding of the Biblical myth of the loss of Eden.

Of Man's first disobedience and the fruit of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste brought death into the world and all our woe with loss of Eden, till one greater Man Restore us and regain the blissful seat,

Sing heavenly muse...13

Throughout Christian history man's first disobedience has been seen as rebellion against God, through Pride. In the Edenic world obedience is seen as the fulfilment of human nature for it signals a genuine connection with God, which means a genuine communion with the rest of the creation as well. But when Adam and Eve, tempted by the Devil, use their powers of self-transcendence to question the limit of their own existence, they set themselves up as definers of their own limits, thus usurping the fundamental prerogative of God the creator. This becomes an act of rebellion which replaces self rule in place of god's rule. But in turning away from God, man has also turned away from the ultimate source of life and bliss. Thus the fall also marks the beginning of all our woes - death, sorrow and suffering. Also, since the original rebellion consisted of man
overstepping limits set by god, pride came to be seen as not only as the original sin, but as the defining characteristic of fallen man. It affects every action for it is seen as an aspect of his very being. The initial act of turning away from god therefore shapes fallen man as well as his subsequent destiny. It means that the proud creature filled with prideful lust for created things in and for themselves, without the capacity for original communion with God, is trapped in the cycle of sin and suffering with the concept of inheritance, interlinked with the solidarity of the human race, ensuring that the effects of the fall are transmitted to later descendants as well.

It is in the context of the separation between the fallen world of man and the divinity of God that the role of the “greater man” has to be understood. For the Christians, Christ signals the real presence of God in history, and his story of hope, birth, teaching and healing, testing and death, resurrection and life shows the working of god-consciousness in finite, historicised existence. Being an incarnation, Christ, unlike human beings, is capable of a sinless existence. But being also of humanity, the Redeemer meshes into the web of human interconnectedness and what he does and achieves then becomes a historical fact that effects everyone else. He lives a life of perfect God-consciousness in the fallen world and therefore through him humanity achieves the possibility of release from its imprisoning cycle of sin. The suffering of Christ on the cross, inflicted by
man, becomes an ever-present reminder of man’s potential for sin. The fact that the son of god voluntarily chose to undergo it signals God’s capacity for both acceptance and forgiveness. It also embodies the divine empathy that enables Christ to take upon himself the accumulated sin of the human race and show the way of redemption to others through the reality of his own sacrifice.

In his fiction, Hawthorne shifts the focus from the divine framework to human reality by first of all accepting the reality of the fallen world as an a-prirori fact and then redefining sin not so much as rebellion against God as rebellion or violation of our common humanity. He deliberately leaves the divine and the eternal out of his framework and sees transcendence from sin in terms of human consciousness, accessible in and through human dealings and concerns. In doing so he participates in the ongoing romantic project of his age - of naturalizing the supernatural. As Chai puts it:

Thus redemption, represented by an earlier theology as an act accomplished by Christ’s death on the cross, now becomes an inner process to be re-enacted in the life of each individual...

Whereas traditional theology had defined the process of consecration as one in which the presence of Christ(God in the world) is transmitted to an object (such as Eucharistic host) through persons who have themselves received this presence via
the apostolic succession from Christ himself, thus establishing an objective sacrality by which Christ becomes physically present in the consecrated object, Romanticism seeks to impart a subjective aura to the process, locating it in the suffusion of an action or choice by a moral element or a feeling. Unlike the objective sacrality of earlier religion, then, the subjective form can be known only through consciousness.14

Hawthorne's understanding of sin is complex, for he sees it as personal, social as well as universal. In Hawthorne, sin stands for a profoundly negative force that opposes and brings down the positives of life. In the metaphysical sense it is the fundamental causal principle that brings ill being into existence and in a more psychological or existential sense it is the inherent tendency to inevitably betray the ideal that humanity sets for itself. It stands for a "deep rooted original wrong", a profoundly negative force seated in the "foul cavern of the human heart". In the Hawthornian scheme of things, sin or evil are terms for the perverse, self-destructive human tendency that works against humanity's own best interests and typically for Hawthorne, this anti-truth defines man. For Hawthorne, man is not a linguistic or sociological creature - he is a sinful creature. In the "Earth's Holocaust" people of the earth decide to light up a giant bonfire in which they decide to burn all the worn out trumpery of human existence.
In their reformist zeal, they throw into the fire symbols of aristocracy, robes of royalty, jewellery, liquor, gold, implements of war, instruments of capital punishment, marriage certificates, ledgers, titles of property, even books. But it emerges at the end that the old world and its old ways will continue until and unless some way is found to reform the human heart because everything that has been thrown into the fire was only the outward manifestation of some deep-rooted inner wrong. In “The Antique Ring” again the narrator Edward Caryll, an American writer, characterizes the human heart as the seat of the evil spirit.

Man’s sinfulness not only causes grief, suffering, and guilt but it also opposes and undermines all the positives of life. In *The Marble Faun*, Miriam and Kenyon characterize it as a void or a chasm that swallows up and negates all human endeavours of the past, the present and the future. The good Christian Hilda objects to this depiction of evil as the original necessity but Miriam goes on to explain:

> I fancy that every person takes a peep into it in moments of gloom and despondency; that is to say, in his moments of deepest insight... The firmest substance of human happiness is but a thin crust spread over it, with just reality enough to bear up the illusive stage scenery amid which we tread. It needs no earthquake to open the chasm. A footstep, little heavier than the
ordinary, will serve; and we must step very daintily, not to
break through the crust at any moment. By and by, we
inevitably sink!... The palace of Caesar has gone down thither,
with a hollow, rumbling sound of its fragments! All the temples
have tumbled into it and thousands of statues have been thrown
after! All the armies and the triumphs have marched into the
great chasm with their martial music playing, as they stepped
over the brink. All the heroes, the statesmen, and the poets! 15

In Hawthorne, evil represents the fundamental truth of not just individuals,
but also social institutions, and its reality undermines all that we habitually
think of as the positives of human existence. Thus, evil swallows up the
temples, the palaces, the armies, the artists, the statesmen and the heroes. It
marks all human efforts and human history and against its reality all human
happiness is seen as an illusion. The artist, the priest, the scientist, the
judge, who judges, and the criminal who is judged are all men and are,
therefore, guilty and sinful. As Melville says, “There is the grand truth
about Nathaniel Hawthorne. He says No! in thunder; but the Devil himself
cannot make him say, Yes. For all men who say Yes lie...” 16

Melville also pointed out that Hawthorne derived his power of blackness
from Calvinism. Five points, summed up in the acronym TULIP capture
the essence of Calvinism: Total Depravity, Unconditional election, Limited atonement, Irresistible grace, and Perseverance of the saints. Of these the most important, Total Depravity, has to do with the corruption which, according to Calvin, reaches man’s innermost being. The result of Adam’s fall from grace, it is inherited by each member of the human race through generations. William H. Shurr, begins his book Rapaccini’s Children: American Writers in a Calvinistic World by condensing Calvin’s extended definition of original sin.

To remove all uncertainty and misunderstanding on the subject, let us define original sin. [It] appears to be an hereditary depravity and corruption of our nature, diffused through all parts of the soul, rendering us obnoxious to the Divine wrath, and producing in us those works which the Scripture calls “works of the flesh.” These two things therefore should be distinctly observed: first, on account of this very corruption, considered as convicted and justly condemned in the sight of God, to whom nothing is acceptable but righteousness, innocence, and purity. And therefore infants themselves, as they bring their condemnation into the world with them, are rendered obnoxious to punishment by their own sinfulness, not by sinfulness of another. For though they have not yet produced the fruits of their iniquity, yet they have the seed of it within

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them; even their whole nature as it were a seed of sin, and therefore cannot be but odious and abominable to God. The other thing to be remarked is, that this depravity never ceases in us, but is perpetually producing new fruits, those works of the flesh, which we have before described, like the emission of flame and sparks from a heated furnace, or like the streams of water from a never failing spring. For our nature is not only destitute of all good, but is so fertile in all evils that it cannot remain inactive.  

For Calvin, Bible is the law, and in his Biblical world the fall infects all - external nature, unborn children. Even the select few, who are God’s elect, are under the compulsion to sin. However, because Christ died for them, and for them alone, they win forgiveness.

Calvin’s uses the concept of universal sin to ensure that the breach between the world of God and the world of man remains at its widest. Hawthorne, living in more secular times, nevertheless uses the Calvinistic emphasis on man’s essential sinfulness to move away from the world of god altogether. In his reconstituted theology the divine scheme is transferred to world of human consciousness.
Hawthorne's complex relationship to Bible, Calvinism and his own Puritan forefathers is best understood in term of the ongoing romantic project of naturalizing the supernatural, described in magnificent detail by Abrams and Pricket. In Hawthorne, sin becomes a human tendency, and though it defines man and inevitably undermines the good, unlike Calvin, it provides for Hawthorne, the one common bond that unites the brotherhood of man, linking each one to the other. Also, for those who can discover the way of sympathy through self-consciousness, it can become an agent for man's recovery. Thus, the battle between God and devil is internalized, and redemption and damnation are both seen as fulfilment of potential human tendencies. In other words to say that Hawthorne transforms sin from a theological concept to a secular one means that in the Hawthornian framework transcendence from sin is effected not in terms of the eternal and the divine; but through human concerns and emotions even as they manifest themselves in human dealings.

In Hawthorne, man's capacity for transcending sin is located in his self-consciousness for man, apart from being sinful, is also a self-conscious creature. While living in nature, man does not just act - he watches himself act; he does not just think - he watches himself think. It is in this capacity to step back and take a look at himself and what he is doing that man's capacity to transcend his sinful state lies. In other words, in the
Hawthornian scheme of things, man will necessarily and inexorably betray the ideals that he has set before himself, and contrary to Christ's kind words on the cross, will know or can know what he has been up to. Eventually out of that self-knowledge and self-consciousness will emerge a choice - he can either persist, or he can make a break by arriving at the positive value of sympathy - the heartfelt awareness of the universal brotherhood of man in face of universal sin. For Hawthorne, the answer to man's dilemma is not in wilfully turning away from the reality of evil but in recognizing and accepting and discovering in this very acceptance the magnetic chain of humanity, the sympathy of one fallen creature for another in an inter-dependent, relational world.

Hawthorne's third person account, in Our Old Home, of his encounter with a diseased child in an English almshouse who stood before him and "held forth its arms, mutely insisting to be picked up," captures the whole process. Chai quotes the passage:

And on our return through the courtyard, after visiting another part of the establishment, here again was this same little wretchedness waiting for its victim, with a joyful, and yet dull recognition about its scabby mouth and in its rheumy eyes. No doubt, the child's mission in reference to our friend was to remind him that he was responsible, in his degree, for all the
suffering and misdemeanours of the world in which he lived, and was not entitled to look upon a particle of its dark calamity as if it were none of his concern; the offspring of a brother’s iniquity being his own blood-relation, and the guilt, likewise, a burthen on him, unless he expatiated it by better deeds.18

In Hawthorne, universal sin leads to both collective guilt and collective responsibility. Each individual is seen to be related to all others through the interdependent solidarity of the human race. The implication is that the personal world of each encompasses that of all others and the suffering of one will affect all others and that guilt and responsibility for sinful acts are mediated, through inherent connectedness of the species, to everyone. In Hawthorne, self-conscious man needs to come to terms with not just individual sinfulness and its social manifestations, but the collective sin of mankind as well, and as we shall see, it is his notion of sympathy that enables him to move beyond the human solidarity in sin to human solidarity in suffering, and to a human response that leads to, what can be termed, a human redemption.

To the extent self is formed in and through consciousness, Man's inability to come to terms with the reality of universal sin in consciousness forms the central dramatic motif for all of Hawthorne's fiction. Man tries to avoid
facing up to the fundamental truth that characterizes him and his existence, for the awareness of universal sin, as Goodman Brown finds out, is a heavy burden to carry. But by deliberately evading this truth man places himself in a false position, and whatever he does then is of necessity, false and hollow. "Roger Malvin's Burial," for example, tells the story of man suffering from guilt all his life for a crime that was no crime, and who ends up shooting his son as an act of atonement which in fact was no atonement.

In *The Scarlet Letter*, Dimmesdale does not have the courage to acknowledge the reality of the letter "A" and the falsehood slowly but surely destroys the pith and substance of his own self and also of the reality around. The author remarks "to the untrue man, the whole universe is false-it is impalpable-it shrinks to nothing within his grasp. And he himself, insofar as he shows himself in a false light, becomes a shadow or indeed ceases to exist." In Hawthorne, all those who deliberately try and evade the reality of sin become hypocrites and their hypocrisy slowly but surely destroys all their vitality.

There are characters in Hawthorne who are "fallen but sinless" in that they are unaware of sin because they are innocent. Ibrahim, the gentle boy is one such, but his very goodness makes him unfit to deal with the harsh realities of the real world. In the romances, characters like Phoebe, Hilda and
Donatello, are unaware of the reality of sin because they are essentially innocent. Since these characters are unfallen, they have a great capacity of being at one with nature, and they also possess a high degree of moral clarity. But in spite of all this, in Hawthorne, they are considered limited for their lack of awareness of the reality of sin cuts them off from the rest of the fallen humanity. Also, their ethereal splendour is shown to be tentative since they have not faced the central predicament of human existence. In the course of the novel, each of them are brought face to face with the reality of evil, and they are made to go through a painful process of readjustment which enables them to come to terms with the reality of the fallen world. In sharp contrast are characters who have experienced the reality of sin even before the action starts, for example, Hester and Miriam. The charm of these "dark" heroines of Hawthorne lies in the fact that they have extracted an intenser being from their experience of sin and have established a deeper, more intimate connection with fallen humanity. As a result, they have full blooded, rich and vital personalities.

Although the recognition of the reality of sin is essential, it is also dangerous, for evil in Hawthorne remains something so profoundly negative that it is almost impossible to accommodate it in consciousness or existence. Many who recognize its reality end up turning away from humanity. This in turn triggers off a process of isolation and alienation

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which ends up destroying their moral being. Ethan Brand begins a heroic search for the unpardonable sin. He finds it in his own heart but in the process ceases to partake in the universal throb. “He had lost his hold on the magnetic chain of humanity. He was no longer brother man... he was now a cold observer looking on mankind as the subject of his experiments.”20 Mr. Hooper puts on a black veil in the story, “The Minister's Black Veil.” The veil is a symbolic acknowledgement of the universal sinfulness of man, but the veil poisons his existence, and he leads a gloomy and alienated life. Goodman Brown cannot help recognizing the truth in the Devil’s assertions about the essential nature of mankind, and he ends up as “a stern, a sad, a darkly meditative, a distrustful, if not a desperate man.”21

If the beginning of all falsehood is the desire to escape from the reality of evil, then cruelty begins when the recognition of this reality of evil leads to anger, revolt or self-righteousness. The worst fate in Hawthorne is reserved for those who make the reality of evil an excuse to turn upon their fellow beings. They become devils themselves. In Fanshawe, Angler after chancing upon the deathbed of his mother, feels the guilty burden of the evil life that he had led. “But his deep repentance for the misery he had brought upon his parents did not produce in him a resolution to do wrong no more. The sudden consciousness of accumulated guilt made him
desperate. He felt as if no one had thenceforth a claim to justice or compassion at his hands... Thus, it was that the devil wrought with him to his own destruction.”22 In The Scarlet Letter, Chillingworth faced with the reality of the letter “A” on his wife's dress turns upon Dimmesdale for revenge and ends up by "violating the sanctity of the human heart.”

Awareness of the reality of sin in Hawthorne inevitably provides the protagonists with the power to see through appearances put up by others and penetrate to their guilty heart. The diabolical characters abuse this power and violate the common tie that binds all of humanity. Knowledge of sin in Hawthorne is never a matter only of intellectual apprehension. It is experiential and characters come to it only in terms of some life experience. Also because of the knowledge of the hidden workings of sin, the protagonist can see more clearly into the suffering heart of humanity. The choice is then his - he can turn away from or turn upon humanity. In both cases, he loses his own humanity. Or he can discover in the very reality of sin, the one principle, or truth that binds all of humanity together.

Characters who preserve their humanity in Hawthorne recognize the reality of sin, suffer the consequences that accompany this dark knowledge but, in the end, not only face up to the truth of universal sin, but also accept it without rancour or rebellion. In this very acceptance, they discover the
common bond of man, the sympathy and brotherhood of one fallen man for another. As A.N.Kaul puts it, "If there is any single 'message' in his work, it is the one which pleads for the wisdom of recognizing the limitation of man's reach and capability and for a relaxed attitude of brotherly tolerance, love and compassion."\(^\text{23}\)

The only positive value that Hawthorne's dark tales of human frailty and sorrow embody is the value of "sympathy". In the fallen world, non-awareness of the ever-present reality of evil is either limiting or falsifying. Awareness too is dangerous for it can lead to alienation, egoism, self-absorption and cruelty. The only way out for trapped humanity is to arrive at the value of sympathy - to the realization that all humanity is bound together in face of the reality of sin, and that if man has to preserve his humanity, he must at all time deal with himself and his fellow sinners, with compassion and gentleness. Without this sense of sympathy, whatever might be his other talents or achievements, man necessarily loses his humanity and is well on his way to becoming a devil.

Because sympathy enables the alienated sinner to rediscover his bonds with the rest of humanity, Hawthorne often embodies the positives associated with sympathy in the stories of characters who are able to snap out of a cold, inhuman self-absorption by rediscovering the capacity to love others
more than oneself or by discovering their interconnectedness with humanity through some other means. In "Egotism: Or The Bosom Serpent" Roderick Elliston, a jealous husband, separated from his wife, suffers from the delusion that there is a serpent in his bosom which gnaws and gnaws. The friendly concern of his friend Herkimer and love and generous forgiveness of his beautiful wife triggers a moment of sympathy in which he forgets himself. The snake then leaves his bosom and with a ripple disappears in the fountain and Elliston finds happiness again. Wakefield on the other hand wilfully cuts himself off from the living links with interdependent humanity, and ends up becoming a shadow of himself.

Hawthorne's use of the term "sympathy" is better understood if the 19th century connotations are kept in mind. Abrams points out in his The Mirror and the Lamp that the term was developed in the eighteenth century, but was adopted and extended by the romantics to suit their own ends. Coleridge uses it to describe Shakespeare's genius, his ability to reconcile in his works the subjective and the objective and to do away with his own isolation and become the personality he contemplates. Hazlit later develops the same idea. The "capacious soul" of Shakespeare is the greatest example of "an intuitive and mighty sympathy." In Abrams' words, "The phenomenon of milfullung (sympathetic imagination) had been the subject of intense speculation for a century by the acutest philosophical minds in
England, including Hume, Hartley, Adam Smith and Godwin. By the concept these men had sought to bridge the gap between atomistic individualism (premised by empirical philosophy) and the possibility of altruism in Eighteenth century terms, the gap between self-love and social.  

Except for one characteristically significant difference, the term has all the romantic connotations for Hawthorne. In social terms, it does away with the evils of excessive individualism, egoism and alienation, by emphasizing the limits of man and the brotherhood of man within those limits. In psychological terms, it emphasizes the victory of heart over the head and leads to the establishment of emotional bonds between individuals. In intellectual terms, it does away with dualism, with the division between subject and object, between feelings and intellect, that marks all knowledge and breeds coldness and lack of concern. In aesthetic terms, it enables the artist to maintain an organic and living connection with both his audience and his subject matter and thereby overcome the hazards of isolation, that go with his profession.

The difference between the romantic concept of sympathy and Hawthorne's is that in Hawthorne it is firmly grounded in the awareness and acceptance of the reality of sin. In fact, it is made a corollary of this acceptance, and it
is argued that it is impossible for anyone to arrive at the value of "sympathy" without experiencing and accepting the reality of sin. Hawthorne offers the value of sympathy as an ideal, but it is an ideal that cannot ever cancel or remove the negative aspects of the actual for it remains functional only through the awareness of negative reality that it is supposed to counteract. Thus Alymer ends up killing his wife when he tries to remove the birthmark which was the symbol of human imperfection. It is for this reason that Hawthorne disapproves of efforts made by gifted individuals like Hester, Holgrave or Hollingsworth, to create a system which would completely nullify the negative consequences of man's sinful nature. In Hawthorne, sin and its attendant consequences define man, and attempts to root out evil altogether are only a result of basic misunderstanding. Hawthorne repeatedly portrays utopian philanthropists, idealists, and revolutionaries as suffering from this misunderstanding. In "Earth's Holocaust" the reformers try to do away with all the world's "trumpery" and injustice and superstition. The sketch ends with the warning that unless some way is found to purify the heart of man, all reforms would prove in the end to have been in vain because it is from the heart that evil springs. This misunderstanding is also shown to be dangerous because it results in the denial of the one positive value that is actually within humanity's reach - the value of sympathy. Thus the reformers mostly do more harm than good, and we are shown that self-
absorption and egoism are the real motives behind their efforts at reformation. Hester and Holgrave, within the scheme of their respective books, become positive characters only when they have retracted from their revolutionary and idealistic positions. Hollingsworth in The Blithedale Romance persists and destroys not just his own moral being, but also Zenobia and the Blithedale experiment.

Hawthorne's differences with the Romantic understanding of sympathy can be pinpointed if we take a close look at Abrams' summary and discussion of Coleridge's poem, Religious Musings. Abrams points out that Coleridge writes as an aspirant to the status of the "Philosophers and Bards" who are able, "with plastic might," to mould the chaos of disintegrating culture "to such perfect forms" as they perceive "in their bright visions of the day." For Coleridge sees himself also as a visionary poet - "as I muse, Behold a VISION gathers in my soul" - who present, past and future sees, and who recounts the history of mankind, from the primeval past, through the revolutionary present to the millennial future, as a brief theodicy in which "all the sore ills" become "the immediate source/of mightier good." According to Abrams, Coleridge construes these events according to a metaphysic of unity, division, and unity regained. Man's highest state is to experience his familial participation in the One:
Tis the sublime of man,
Our noontide Majesty, to know ourselves
Parts and proportions of one wondrous whole!
This fraternizes man... but 'tis God
Diffused through all, that doth make all one whole.

(Lines 127-31)

In these lines, Abrams points out that essential evil consists in man’s attempt to be self-sufficient, which shatters the whole into chaos of disinherited, solitary, sensual, and mutually alienated selves. “The moral world’s cohesion” lost,
we become
An Anarchy of Spirits! Toy-bewitched,
Made blind by lusts, disinherited of soul
No common centre Man, no common sire
Knoweth! A sordid solitary thing
Mid countless brethren with a lonely heart
Through courts and cities the smooth savage roams
Feeling himself, his own low self the whole,

(lines 143-52)

Conversely when man, “all self-annihilated” shall repossess the alienated parts in act of all comprehensive sympathy, he will effect the redemption prophesied in the Second Coming.
When (man) by sacred sympathy might make
The whole one Self! Self, that no alien knows!
Self, spreading still! oblivious of its own,
Yet all possessing! This is Faith
This the Messiah's destined victory! 26
(lines, 153-58)

For Hawthorne in the fallen world, there is no noon tide majesty, no transcedent wondrous whole and, therefore, there is no "sacred" sympathy. For him the only truth that is available to man is the anarchy of spirits in a sordid solitary thing. And for Hawthorne what fraternizes man is not "sacred sympathy", but a very human sympathy of one suffering creature for another, of countless brethren with lonely hearts. What Hawthornian sympathy offers is not a faith in a destined victory, but the vision of man's eternal struggle against negative human realities.

In Hawthorne, therefore, the tension between sin and sympathy, the ideal and the actual, can never be resolved finally for the human being is at once the soldier, the battleground and the enemy. He must forever battle against his own negative realities. He cannot win, but if he recognizes the reality and the universality of sin and discovers the way of sympathy, he cannot lose either. In Hawthorne's scheme of things men cannot overcome the evil
within themselves, but neither can evil overcome them if they have forged close ties with each other, if they are eternally vigilant against its hidden operations, and if they are willing to treat individual lapses with compassion and understanding. Hawthorne's plea for the recognition of the reality and universality of evil is at the same time a plea for the recognition of the universal brotherhood of sinful man, a plea for eternal vigilance in a struggle that will go on forever.

III

The Hawthornian artist can play a meaningful role in this struggle if he possesses the quality of sympathy. In "The Custom House" chapter Hawthorne pinpoints three modes of perception available to the artist. He discusses the advantages and disadvantages associated with each and explicitly states his own preference:

If the imaginative faculty refused to act at such an hour, it might well be deemed a hopeless case. Moonlight, in a familiar room, falling so white upon the carpet, and showing all its figures so distinctly, - making every object so minutely visible, yet so unlike a morning or noontide visibility, - is a medium the most suitable for a romance writer to get aquatinted with his illusive guests. There is the little domestic scenery of the well known apartment; the chairs with each its separate individuality; the
centre table, sustaining a work-basket, a volume or two, and an extinguished lamp; the sofa; the bookcase; the picture on the wall; - all these details, so completely seen, are so spiritualized by the unusual light, that they seem to lose their actual substance, and become things of intellect... Thus, therefore, the floor of our familiar room has become a neutral territory, somewhere between the real world and fairy land, where the Actual and the Imaginary may meet, and each imbue itself with the nature of the other... The somewhat dim coal-fire has an essential influence in producing the effect which I would describe. This warmer light mingles itself with the cold spirituality of the moonbeams, and communicates, as it were, a heart, and sensibilities of human tenderness to the forms which fancy summons up. It converts them from snow-images into men and women.27

In the above passage, the three modes of perception are symbolized by three different kinds of light. To begin with, there is the “noon-tide” visibility through which objects can be seen clearly as they are. Then there is moonlight which spiritualizes objects by making them lose their actual substance. Finally, there is the coal fire light which throws a warm unobtrusive tinge over everything.
The noon-tide visibility is the realistic, empirical mode of perception. It is shown to be destructive for the romance writer for it destroys the soap bubble of romance. In the Hawthornian context, realism, empiricism by themselves cannot take the artist too far for since the fall, reality, as well as man's perception of it, is seen to be tainted. In “New Adam and Eve” Hawthorne writes, “We who are born into world's artificial system can never adequately know how little in our present state and circumstances is natural, and how much is merely the interpolation of the perverted heart and mind of man. It is only through the medium of imagination that we can loosen the iron fetters of reality and make ourselves even partially sensible what prisoners we are.”28

Man by nature is flawed and since he has not been able to come to terms with his limitations, history is a record not so much of man's progress as of his repeated errors. Moreover, since the present emerges out of the past, unless the knot of past errors is undone, the vicious cycle will continue in the future as well. In such a situation, objective and realistic representation of the fallen world will serve no useful purpose. Hawthorne's consistent criticism of the novel, the sciences and the scientists has to be understood in light of his understanding of the fundamental inadequacy of the empirical mode of perception.
The Hawthornian artist needs to break away from the iron fetters of empirical truth and reality, and it is the faculty of imagination that offers him the chance to escape. Hawthorne, in this respect, is very much a romantic, and it is this view of imagination that he seeks to highlight in the repeated distinction that he draws between the "novels" (written by Englishmen) and the "romances" written by himself. It needs to be pointed out here that Hawthorne's criticism of the "novel" form is a criticism of the a certain mode of perception itself.

In the passage quoted above, moonlight symbolizes imagination. Imagination, Hawthorne says, is ideal for the romance writer. Behind the imperfect empirical world is the ideal, perfect world, and the faculty of imagination by transforming the actual, by spiritualizing it, making it remote and strange, enables the writer to glimpse the ideal forms underlying the actual reality. Thus, even small and trifling objects, when they undergo this transformation, acquire dignity. It should be noted that imagination does not allow the writer to escape the grip of actuality totally, and completely attain the perfect, ideal world. Rather, it enables each - the ideal and the actual - to imbue itself with the nature of the other. It should also be noted that two conditions need to be fulfilled before this faculty can become operational. First, the author must retreat from the world and be alone with himself (hence "the deserted chamber"). Secondly, he must be
completely familiar with the subject that is to be spiritualized (hence the well-known apartment and its domestic scenery).

Though the moon-beam is ideal for the romance writer, it is not sufficient in itself. The artist needs the warmer light of the coal-fire—that is, perception born of sympathy. Without sympathy, imagination remains cold and the spiritual form that it conjures up remain snow images. It is only sympathy that imparts human tenderness to these forms and converts them from snow images into real men and women.

Hawthorne's view of imagination is clearly derived from the romantics, who also believed that the artist produces art not by mechanically imitating external nature, but by converting aspects of external world from facts to his own subjective images, ideas and feelings through the imaginative process. The work of art is considered as essentially internal made external, and much of the romantic theory is preoccupied in explaining how this is brought about. Coleridge's theory of imagination, since it assimilates the various strands of romantic thought, is the most comprehensive attempt to come to grips with this problem, and a brief discussion of it would help to pinpoint Hawthorne's debt to romanticism.

"We must begin" says Coleridge, with "a truth self-grounded, unconditional and known by its own lights." This truth is to be found in
“the sum or I AM” that “spirit self, and self-consciousness” which may be described “as a perpetual self-duplication of one and the same power into object and subject, which pre-suppose each other and can exist only as anti-theses.” The entire universe is the self-duplication of the infinite I AM, which perpetuates itself by reconciling self created oppositions. This creative process is reflected in the Primary Imagination, through which individual mind perceive the universe and it is echoed again in the secondary or recreate imagination which only the artist possesses. “The primary IMAGINATION I hold to be the living Power and prime Agent of all human perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM. The secondary imagination I consider an echo of the former... It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate...” This secondary imagination in creating art, echoes the creative principle underlying the universe and just as the universe, in its totality, represents the infinite I AM of God, the work of art represents the finite I AM of the artist. Abrams writes, "We also find in the eighteenth century the beginnings of a more radical solution to the problem of poetic fictions, one which would sever supernatural poetry entirely from the principle of imitation, and from any responsibility to the empirical world. The key event in this development was the replacement of the metaphor of the poem as imitation, ‘a mirror of nature’ by that of the poem as hetrocosm, ‘a second nature’ created by the poet in an act analogous to
God's creation of the world... This parallel between God and the poet, and between God's relation to his world and the poet to his poem, fostered the earliest appearance of the doctrine, so widespread today, that a poem is disguised self-revelation, in which its creator, 'visibly invisible' at the same time expresses and conceals himself."

The romantic artist sets this assimilative imagination in motion by withdrawing from the empirical world and through long concentrated thought transforming and modifying it in terms of his own subjective mind. Thus Wordsworth, at all times, endeavoured to view his subject steadily and recollected emotions in tranquillity. Once the imagination is set in motion, it expresses itself in the form of a spontaneous overflow over which the poet has little or no control, and the art forms that it creates possess the attributes of living and growing things.

Abrams has pointed out that Coleridge's theory of imagination was the most important channel for flow of organicism in the English speaking world. Literary composition was earlier described in terms of imitation, or in terms of impact on the audience, but from nineteenth century onwards it came to be described in terms of gestation and growth. Moved by a predominant passion, the artist now gave "birth" to work of art which was seen as springing to completion almost independent of the will or the
conscious intention of the author. Like the living body, the art form was also a unified whole which owed its being to the coexistence and the living inter-dependence of its parts. The artist instead of being a maker or a craftsman became a “creator” and, like God, he invented new forms which in turn reflected his personality. And literature's essential function was now not so much “to please” or “instruct” the audience as “move” it emotionally. The criterion of intensity, Abrams tells us, now superseded older terms like “truth” and “universality” as a standard for judging artistic value.33

For Hawthorne too, art is a subjective phenomenon that transforms the empirical world and creates organic forms. He, too, begins with a truth “self-grounded, unconditional and known by its own light.” His truth, however, is not the positive creativity of God which reconciles opposites into wholes, but the perverse power which perpetuates oppositions and causes destruction and death. For fallen man, the universe is a manifestation not of the former but the latter, and the true artist creates not in accordance with the infinite truth but in spite of the infinite truth. Although imagination, in accordance with the romantic tradition, modifies the external world, it is not sufficient in itself. The Hawthornian artist needs to counter the effects of man's sinful condition. Hawthorne's concept of sympathy is meant to do precisely this, and this is the reason why the coal
fire light must mingle with the moonlight for the romance writer. The artist's creation can be organic and life like, but the animation would come not from the cold moonlight, but from the warm coal-fire. For Hawthorne, the magic power that diffuses the tone and spirit of unity, that blends, as it were, fuses each to each is not romantic imagination but his own concept of sympathy. And so the end of art for him is not “beauty” or “pleasure” but the upholding of the unpleasant truth whose recognition can lead the reader to sympathy - the reality of evil. Thus in The Marble Faun, Miriam finds fault with Guido's painting which depicts “the triumph of goodness over the evil principle.” She criticizes it on the ground that the battle could never have been “such a child's play as Guido's dapper Archangel seems to have found it.”\(^34\) On the other hand, Sodoma's painting of Christ bound to a pillar “deserted both in heaven and in earth” is held up as an ideal for art. “Sodoma in this matchless picture, has done more towards reconciling the incongruity of Divine Omnipotence and outraged, suffering Humanity, combined in one person, than the theologians ever did.”\(^35\)

In other words, since the artist lives in a sinful world, mere imitation of fallen reality will not lead to great art. He must (despite the inherent difficulties) recognise the reality of sin and look beyond the empirical world by using the faculty of imagination. The artist can evoke imagination by retreating from the world and by internalising his subject to such an
extent that it begins to have an independent existence in himself. However, this process is fraught with danger for the artist, because it can lead to alienation and self-absorption. These negative effects and also the negative effects of sin can be counteracted only if imagination is allied with sympathy - the recognition of the spiritual brotherhood of man in face of sin. Once imagination and sympathy are allied, the work that artist creates, is organic because the artist has transferred his own felt life to it. When completed, the art object, instead of reflecting some pre-existing reality, reflects the mind, the personality and the thought processes of its creator. And its chief value lies in the fact that it not only enables the reader to discover the truth about the world i.e. the reality of sin, but also enables him to discover, in this very recognition, the spiritual bond that binds all of humanity.

In the Hawthornian scheme of things, the reader has a very crucial role to play for in the final analysis, it is only the crucial interchange with the reader that offers a way to recovery to the author from the alienation and isolation that goes hand in hand with the creative process. Millington is right when he charts Hawthorne’s growth as a writer in terms of the shifting of emphasis from the mastery of an ever dangerous ambition to the possibilities of engagement with his reader and their community.36 Repeatedly, in his prefaces, Hawthorne describes the unreality of the
authorial self for the choice of the career imposes a dangerous distance from the living world as well as a burden of guilt for wilfully withdrawing from the world, and a debilitating awareness of the potential for coercion inherent in the exercise of narrative authority.

In the 1851 preface to *Twice Told Tales*, Hawthorne calls himself the "obscurest man of letters in America". In the Preface to *The Snow Image* addressed to Horatio Bridge, he describes the isolation imposed upon him by his vocation in great detail, and how publication opened a way out for him from an isolation that was almost like an imprisonment.

I sat down by the wayside of life, like a man under enchantment, and shrubbery sprung up around me, and the bushes grew to be saplings, and the saplings became trees, until no exit appeared possible, through the entangling depths of my obscurity. And there, perhaps, I should be sitting at this moment, with the moss on the imprisoning tree trunks, and the yellow leaves of more than a score of autumns piled above me, if it had not been for you. For it was through your interposition- and that, moreover, unknown to himself, - that your early friend was brought before the public.37

In “The Custom House” and “The Old Manse” Hawthorne describes another kind of estrangement, distinctively American - the shame and the
isolation of a descendant of the witch burning Puritans who has taken to writing “idle stories”. In his private letters too, Hawthorne repeatedly articulates his sense of how his vocation leads to alienation and lack of authenticity. For Hawthorne, an enlivening contact with the reader confers the kind of authenticity upon the artist that the relationship with Sophia provided the lover. The crucial importance of the reader is stressed again and again in Hawthorne’s prefatory writing. The Twice-told Tales were attempts, and very imperfectly successful ones, to open an intercourse the world”. He writes in the “The Custom House” that “as thoughts are frozen and utterance benumbed, unless the speaker stand in some true relation with his audience - it may be pardonable to imagine that a friend - a kind and apprehensive, though not the closest friend- is listening to our talk.”

Lack of sympathetic response form the reader can prove destructive for the writer. In the preface to the Twice-told Tales, Hawthorne describes the response accorded to his tales and its effect on him. “To this total lack of sympathy, at the age when his mind would naturally have been most effervescent, the Public owe it (and it is certainly an effect not to be regretted on either-part) that the Author can show nothing for the thought and industry of that portion of his life, save the forty sketches, or thereabouts, included in these volumes.”

Millington writes, “Implicit in the commitment to interchange is Hawthorne’s remarkable dependence upon the reader. The freedom from
interpretative coercion that he allows his readers puts his works extraordinarily at risk. At stake is not just the meaning of the work but its very existence... and when the fiction becomes not just a structure of meaning but a state of being... when the self is invested in the work - and is made real by being read - one risks not simply being misunderstood but being erased, as it were. The malleability of the self is at once the chief hope, and the main anxiety of Hawthorne's work.”

In this process of exchange the reader too is at risk for in defining the figure of Hawthorne he is being defined himself. While reading, the reader necessarily surrenders his self to the author who in turn has to ensure that no transgression is ever committed through a deliberate violation of the rights of the reader. Always acutely aware that the entire author-reader relationship could be jeopardized through an authorial imposition of the self, Hawthorne settles for indirect communication: what he calls veiling. By adopting this mode he seeks to ensure that the interchange is at all times a free exchange. Hawthorne's writings then become an elaborate structure of mutual self-discovery by the reader and the writer.

With a little bit of help from M.H. Abrams and Robert Siegle, we can not only sum up the essentials of Hawthornian poetics, but also compare and contrast it with both traditional poetics rooted in mimesis and post-modern poetics rooted in deconstructionism. In the *Mirror and the Lamp* Abrams...
structures the field of criticism into a stable discourse around four fixed co-ordinates - universe, audience, artist and work. He summarizes the history of criticism as a gradual movement from one point to the other. The mimetic orientation, (in Plato and Aristotle) derived its validity by focusing on the universe. The pragmatic orientation (from Hellenistic through the Neo-classical era) focused on the audience. The expressive theories focused (late eighteenth and nineteenth century) on the artist, while the objective theories, which shaped the critical orientation of Elliot and Welleck focused on the work.\textsuperscript{41}

Siegle borrows Abrams’ framework to map out the difference between traditional and post-modern poetics. In traditional poetics, he suggests, the relation of author to the text is that of “intention”, conscious or unconscious. In post-modern poetics, however, this relation is defined, “less as intention than as circulation of the various code possibilities at a given authorial point in space and time.”\textsuperscript{42} In Hawthorne, however, the relation between the author and the text is self-consciously expressionistic for the author in setting out to tell a particular story invariably also tells the story of the creation of the particular authorial self that has crafted the narrative. The relation between reader and the text has been classically thought of as one of “objectivity”, with the reader allegedly approaching the text open-
mindedly to see what he might discover there. The post-modernist poetics dismisses such neutrality as illusory, and instead posits a relation, "governed by a set of interpretative conventions that code the reading experience from the very outset." For Hawthorne this particular relationship is governed by ideas of influence often dramatized in his romances through the presentation of mesmerism. Far from being neutral or impersonal in his engagement with the text, the Hawthornian reader risks himself in two ways - a non-sympathetic reading could lead to a lost opportunity for making a genuine connection with the author, while too much of a surrender could lead to an invasion of his own privacy - the violation of the sanctity of the human heart.

The relation between the author and the world, whether internal or external, recognizes a degree of constitutive activity and is shaped by the author’s “will to mastery”. The post-modernists however, argue that the author can never wholly master the world that he constructs, that the authorial master code is never perfectly coherent, stable or fixed and that it is constantly being challenged by the heterogeneity of inherently dynamic codes which threaten to “overthrow the “master with new implications”.

As for the relation between the reader and the world, in traditional poetics it is governed by the concept of “competence”. In the traditional view it is assumed that the reader as subjects bring with them a knowledge of the
world as object, and that "the more competent readers are, the more accurate a correspondence we will find between their views of the world and the world itself". For the post-modernists however, competency, "resides in the number of templates or conceptual overlays a reader can flip through in search of an interpretative pattern." 45 In Hawthorne, the relation between the author and the world and that between the reader and the world are both governed by concept of relationality, for existence in the fallen world is itself seen as part of an interdependent world, where relations to all others are internal to the construction of the self. It is this relational understanding that points to the experience of sin being mediated throughout the world through its interconnectedness. It is this relational understanding that also points to the solidarity of human race that both the author and the reader need to discover through the recognition and acceptance of the reality of sin.

In tradition poetics, the relationship between the text and the world would be termed "mimetic" for the text imitates or represents the world, while the relationship between the author and reader would be governed by "theories of subjectivity" for such theories are grounded in the metaphysical conception of selfhood which shape both creation and reception. In post-modern poetics however, the link between the author and reader would be termed semiotic "for both roles are cast out of the fluid codes by which
each organizes the text as world, the world as text." And the connection between the text and the world would be classified as "constitutive" for "both appear to the intellect in a mediated form."46

For Hawthorne the relationship between the text and the world is better described as "transformative" rather than "mimetic" or "constitutive," for the Hawthornian romance neither seeks to reflect, nor bring into doubt the reality of the fallen world. Instead, it seeks to transcend it through self-consciousness. As for the relationship between the author and the reader, it is not so much the "theory of subjectivity" nor semiotics that counts. Instead, it is his own theory of sympathy that governs the relationship.

Implicit in these redefinition of literary relations are basic shifts in the ways the basic literary co-ordinates are generally perceived. The text in Hawthorne is seen neither as an autonomous entity with a determinate core of meaning, nor an arrangement of various code elements with prolific dissemination of meaning. Instead, it becomes a self-conscious expression of the artist attempting to transform and transcend the fallen world and, therefore, a healthy meeting ground for the reader and the writer. The reader is seen neither as a neutral agent, nor as a particular function of a set of interpretative conventions. Rather, he is seen as a being at risk, who can paradoxically also be the redeemer of the author and his literary enterprise.
Similarly, the author shifts from an autonomous agent to a being constituted by the text and the reader. And the world? It is not seen as an entity that needs to be realistically represented, nor is it seen as fiction that needs to be reconstructed. Rather, it represents an interdependent and interconnected set of relations that needs to be transcended.
NOTES

1 Hawthorne, Tales and Sketches 1157.

2 See Edwin Haviland Miller, Salem is my Dwelling Place: A Life of Nathaniel Hawthorne (Iowa city: Univ. of Iowa Press, 1991). Miller sees the death of the father as the crucial event in Hawthorne’s life - an event that shaped Hawthorne’s mental make-up. According to Miller he remained in search of a father all his life.


4 Remarkably, Sophia got to know that he had written and published Fanshawe only after his death.

5 Turner, A Biography 89.


7 For most critics the unfinished manuscripts demonstrate Hawthorne’s despairing struggle to create with a halting pen, his growing frustration in face of his diminishing prowess. See Edward Hutchins Davidson, Hawthorne’s Last Phase (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1949.) Charles Swan, Nathaniel Hawthorne: Tradition and Revolution (Cambridge: University Press, 1991)sees the last decade as Hawthorne’s most productive period. He reads the unfinished romances in the context of the civil war and argues that they represent Hawthorne’s ambitious attempt to create an entirely new kind of fiction in which the important question is not “who am I?” or “where am I?” but “when am I?”


14 Chai 200.

15 Hawthorne, *Novels* 987.


18 Chai 203. See also Patricia Dunlavy Valenti, *To Myself a Stranger: A Biography of Rose Hawthorne Lathrop* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1991). Hawthorne did pick up the child, and in her *Memories of Hawthorne*, his youngest daughter Rose mentions this passage as the one that moved her the most in all her father's writings; also, that it served as the inspiration behind her setting up one of the first ever homes for cancer patients. Rose converted to Roman Catholicism and was eventually declared a saint. Hawthorne's other daughter Una, the one who served as a model for Pearl, ended up in a mad house, while his son, Julian, who wrote his father's biography, served a prison sentence for petty theft.


20 Hawthorne, *Tales* 1064.

21 Hawthorne, *Tales* 288.
22 Hawthorne, Novels 92.


24 Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp 332


27 Hawthorne, Novels 149.

28 Hawthorne, Tales 746.


30 Coleridge, Selected Poetry and Prose 263


32 For Coleridge’s influence on American Transcendentalism see F.O. Matthiessen’s chapter, “The Organic Principle: From Coleridge to Emerson” in The American Renaissance, 133-139. Hawthorne’s debt to Romantic thought is discussed by Matthiessen in the section “Allegory and Symbolism”. Perceptive comments on the subject are to be found also in Fogle’s analysis of the “The Artist of the Beautiful” in Hawthorne’s Fiction: The Light and the Dark. For a more recent treatment of the topic see G.R. Thompson, The Art of Authorial Presence.

33 Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp 134.

34 Hawthorne, Novels 1005

35 Hawthorne, Novels 1006.

36 Millington 42.

37 Hawthorne, Tales 1155.
38 Hawthorne, *Novels* 121.

39 Hawthorne, *Tales* 1150.

40 Millington 51-52. My discussion of Hawthorne’s understanding of the role of the reader owes much to Millington’s incisive and insightful analysis.


43 Siegle 237.

44 Siegle 237.

45 Siegle 238.

46 Siegle 236.