

# Individualistic and Social Moral Concerns in Hawthorne's Novels

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**Abstract**—In all his novels, Hawthorne, the American writer, created settings in which his moral concerns could be presented through the actions of his characters. He illustrated his concern over the moral fall of man in the nineteenth century obsession for technological advancement. In “The Blithedale Romance” and “The House of Seven Gables” quite vividly, he pictured individualistic moral vices as the result of outside forces which caused social immorality. “The Marble Faun”, in its own turn, has the same type of social moral concerns to present: the story of nineteenth century modern man and his individualistic moral issues which lead to his social moral fall. He depicted the dominant themes of individualistic moral vices which all lead to social alienation and rejection. He showed hypocrisy and evil intentions as leading to social immoral atmosphere.

**Keywords**—American literature, immorality, individuals, sin, social moral concerns.

## I. INTRODUCTION

NATHANIEL Hawthorne has been a subject for several serious studies following the publication of Henry James's 1879 book – “Hawthorne” - in “The American Men of Letters series”, and many literary critics have scrutinized his writing from different angles. Some recent studies have used historical approaches, emphasizing either on his use of older historical settings, particularly seventeenth-century Puritan New England, or the nineteenth-century world in which he wrote. Hawthorne knew his history, but the focus in Hawthorne's writing was on the cultural context which had come down as a historical heritage from his puritan ancestors. Even more new historical analyses of Hawthorne and his writing in 1990s placed him within that culture. He had relatively conservative views on the matters of morality, on the individualistic level as the relationship between man and his creator, and on the social level on such grounds as justice, gender, class, and race.

After World War II, American literature scholars attempted to announce the independence of American literature from an English literary tradition. D. H. Lawrence, considering Melville's essay, “Hawthorne and His Mosses” (1850), in his “Studies in Classic American Literature” (1923), claimed that:

*“blue-eyed darling Nathaniel knew disagreeable things in his inner soul but was careful to send them out in disguise” [1].*

Nathaniel Hawthorne was a prominent writer who had the peculiar insight into the fact of soul. He had the power of

tracing the relationship between the spiritual laws to the human soul; and that look was through the stand point of Providence. For him, God's moral laws were the criteria through which he approached everything he investigated [2].

The life he depicted was described with a surprising fidelity, something as we still think that we see them on a solid ground, and sometimes with the power of one sentence, the whole picture is changed into a symbolic world. Even the introductions to “Mosses from an old Manse” and “The Scarlet Letter” seem to strike the reader with the symbolism one can find on every page [1]. For Nathaniel Hawthorne, nature and moral laws are in direct relationship with the human being. In giving the reader a picture of human happiness and wretchedness, he is giving us a glimpse of the moral relationship among the elements of his works by acknowledging that God is all- good.

There is also a convincing pattern that characterizes Hawthorne's portrayal of women, first in some of his most powerful stories and then, as they emerge, in more complex form, in the novels. We can distinguish a pattern, an implicit analytic shape in Hawthorne's representation of women in his literary works. For him this aspect of social morality had specific importance, It can be said that he even had concerns to reveal. Apart from the mere representation of women in his works and their social roles which they played in the society, he also focused on the gender relationship between male and female characters. For sure, the morality concern he nourished in his mind involved both the presence of women in the society as well as the way they were treated by their male counterparts. Hawthorne's representation of women and the way he presented it in his works and the focus on their problems in the society whether represented as psychological or social had led to a vast number of literary works on Hawthorne's Feminism. Reference [3] in an essay titled “Thwarted Nature: Nathaniel Hawthorne as Feminist” observes that many of the stories most often valued and taught contain a sustained analysis of male behavior and at the same time targeted at attacking on their male manners. Again and again, in many of his short stories as well as novels he illustrates encounters between men and women. In many of these encounters, male characters- disguising their underlying anxiousness, aggression, and pride as ambition or obsession or even puritanical code of behavior- do not seem to hear or even refuse the invitation to full, complex, and humane life offered by their female counterparts to make the reader feel pity as to losing the opportunity of having a humane life. Through acts of refusal and ignoring the women's rights, his stories have been made interesting for the reader to continue. These acts of

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neurotic refusal punish, violate their human rights and even kill off the women and leave the male characters in utterly empty lives with no hope [4].

Hawthorne has created female characters who are not only embodiment of positive values but their opponents or violators feel miserable and destroyed in life; Zenobia, Miriam, and pre-eminently Hester are good example in this regard. Indeed, these female characters seem to exemplify values linked to women in middle-class domestic ideology of the time. Hawthorne, through his depiction of the male violation of their rights criticizes the low moral basis of such a society that has diverted from the righteous path of humanity and conscience [5].

Reference [3] calls the predominant type of masculinity which was in line with the manhood tradition and its values at time of Hawthorne which was attacked by him as "feminism". This masculinity troubled many residents and observers during Hawthorne's time.

## II. THE SCARLET LETTER

"The Scarlet Letter" proposes many moral dilemmas. One of these dilemmas is the central idea which is arranged in the author's mind. Possibly, he tries to specify that the only tranquility for the human soul is to appear exactly what it is.

The hypocrisy avoids the human soul to stand in its own position [1]. This is exhibited in the contrasted characters of Dimmesdale and Hester. Whatever mistake related to logic or emotion, atmosphere or inner soul factors, prevents Hester from fully realizing the Christian ideal of repentance.

In his masterpiece, Hawthorne also depicts the downward tendency of sin. Once a soul is departed from the right path, whether due to ignorance or the force of society, or error, with every step, it is in greater difficulty. In this spiral of guilt and wretchedness, Hester's marriage with Chillingworth was a cardinal error leading to other moral falls [2].

One more moral situation is illustrated in "The Scarlet Letter"- an experience of sin causes the soul to reach noble results, through repentance. Dimmesdale's preaching is moral and influential [6].

He could not have left such a big impact on the community, had he lived and died otherwise, and Hester's downward movement led to higher elevation. One of the other effects of sin committed by a person might be to get more understanding of others. This could be seen in the sermons Dimmesdale was preaching which can be indicative of his superb insight into the nature of human soul [7].

This seems as if his guilt made him more understanding of the others and more tolerant of other sinners. Hester is another example of this understanding. According to Turner (1961) her sin taught her to recognize sin in others and look more warmly and sympathetically into the hearts of sinners [7]. This feature represents the author's moral philosophy. Hawthorne portrays sin with all its terrible results, yet he illustrates the other side of the fact, which reforms some shallow thinking, and draws our attention to the love for solution. Hester is a sinner; but she acknowledges her sin and openly displays it to the community. Then as a result, the symbol of her shame

became her honor because of accepting her guilt and trying to hide nothing. Her salvation lies in the truth. In her conversation with Dimmesdale she says:

*"Oh, Arthur!" cried she, 'forgive me! In all things else, I have striven to be true! Truth was the one virtue which I might have held fast, and did hold fast, through all extremity; save when thy good—thy life—thy fame—were put in question! Then I consented to a deception. But a lie is never good, even though death threaten on the other side! Dost thou not see what I would say? That old man!—the physician!—he whom they call Roger Chillingworth!—he was my husband!"* [8].

In "The Scarlet Letter", Hawthorne seems to be preoccupied with sin and its effect on the sinner along with what it may bring on the community; thus, he has a distinction between individualistic and social moral concerns. He believed in the reality of sin and guilt; even he seems to share with his Puritan ancestors the belief in man's depravity and inherited guilt. According to [9]:

*"The guilt that Hawthorne felt over the actions of his ancestor had an enormous impact on his writings. In the "Custom House," his introduction to The Scarlet Letter, Hawthorne accepts the guilt from his forefathers and offers to repent for their crimes. This unusual way of viewing guilt and sin is one driving factor in Hawthorne's writing. The other, which is closely related to the first, is the relationship between men, and of man to humanity as a whole. It centers around the consequences of breaking the basic links between humans by committing acts of sin"*

"The Scarlet Letter" focuses on the issues relating to human nature including sin, guilt, hypocrisy, revenge and pride. According to the Biblical teaching, human beings, as children of Adam, have all inherited sin. Bible also states that human being is aware of the good and evil and he according to God's will should be free moral creatures in whom faith, love, and will power to do either good or evil can run deep. Apart from some detailed criticism Hawthorne held against Puritan way of life, he believed in the moralistic principles of Christianity and those of his Puritan ancestors. In his works we see people who commit sin, and encounter the consequences. In "The Scarlet Letter" hiding the committed sin destroys the physical, spiritual and moral structure of the society; while confession and repentance bring about salvation and grace. Even he is illustrating that personal sin leads to communal disorders and individualistic virtue leads to social prosperity:

*"The Scarlet Letter is much more subtle than "The Minister's Black Veil" in its treatment of a minister who hides his true self from others. The use of an actual black veil in the short story gives way to an invisible veil in the novel. Most interestingly, Hawthorne explores the psychology of such veiling – the psychology of hypocrisy. "Canst thou deem it, Hester, a consolation," Dimmesdale says in the forest scene, "that I must stand up in my pulpit, and meet so many eyes turned upward to my face, as if the light of heaven were beaming from it! – must see my flock hungry for the truth, and listening to my words as if a tongue of Pentecost were speaking! – and then look inward, and discern the black reality of what they idolize? I have laughed, in bitterness and*

*agony of heart, at the contrast between what I seem and what I am!" (1: 191). Even in this admission, Dimmesdale fools himself. He ignores his own responsibility for the false interpretation that his hungry flock places upon his words" [2].*

For Hawthorne, society should embrace understanding and even love to those who commit sins. He expresses his criticism of the society which is intolerant of the persons who might divert from the right path of morality. For him to be a self judge is unwise. This is a Biblical example of Jesus in dealing with the sinners.

Reference [10] describes judgementalism as attitude of "arrogance by which one assumes an air of superiority over others by constantly indulging in criticism, faultfinding and an unforgiving spirit towards others while ignoring the same faults in oneself"[10]. According to Biblical teaching and what Hawthorn tries to imply, a spirit of love, mercy, beneficence, forgiveness, and grace should govern society's atmosphere in dealing with those who commit a sin.

In the opening chapter of the novel, the author depicts a gloomy picture; that of "sad- colored garments and gray, steeple- crowned hats, the cemetery, and the prison [11]. There is of course one exception of the wild rose bush that had grown beside the prison. This might be the author's hope that this flower might be a symbol of the "sweet moral blossom may relieve the darkling close of a tale of human frailty and sorrow. Reference [12] regards the prison as the symbol of moral evil - sin, and the cemetery as the natural evil - death. The first picture given to the reader emphasizes the upper hand of the moral evil over the moral good.

Sin as an important manifestation of moral evil is of manifold in "The Scarlet Letter". Reference [7] classifies the sins as the sins of flesh, sins of weakness, sins of will, and the sins of intellect. He regards the sin committed by Hester and Dimmesdale as condemned by the social rules. As if he is pointing to another type of sin – transgressing the social laws. This is what leads to Hypocrisy and how Hawthorne presents his character's hypocrisy:

*"More than any other character in the novel – more than even Roger Chillingworth– little Pearl keeps Dimmesdale's hypocrisy front and center before the reader. Hawthorne makes Pearl a kind of one-woman chorus, who asks repeatedly what the scarlet letter means and why the minister keeps his hand over his breast. Why would Hawthorne choose Pearl for this role? In part, perhaps, because he wants to play upon the romantic bias toward children's innocence. More important, Pearl is intimately identified with the letter; she is the "scarlet letter in another form; the scarlet letter endowed with life!" (1: 102). Hester even dresses her to resemble the letter, effectively embroidering Pearl, as she had embroidered the letter, to flaunt the child in front of the Puritans. In asking what the letter means, Pearl asks about herself and her origins – about her own meaning and being in the world" [2].*

Hester from the beginning of the story appears with a Scarlet letter on her chest and her little daughter Pearl as the result of her sin. Her sin is apparent to the world, while her partner- Dimmesdale- has hidden it. He constantly puts his

hand over his heart which is a hint. Henry James (1963) describes Dimmesdale as

*"the tormented young Puritan minister who carries the secret of his own lapse from pastoral purity locked beneath an exterior that commends itself to the reverence of his flock, while he sees the softer partner of his guilt standing in the full glare of exposure and humbling herself to the misery of atonement" [13].*

Another important character, Chillingworth, who is described as small, thin, and deformed, has two moral deviations. One can be regarded as an individualistic moral problem – his marrying Hester through selfishness which caused him to marry a young passionate girl, though he knew she would not love him and he would not make a good husband for her. A type of selfish oppression to the poor defenseless girl which violated her rights as well as freedom. In chapter 4 he expresses:

*'Mine was the first wrong, when I betrayed thy budding youth into a false and unnatural relation with my decay. Therefore, as a man who has not thought and philosophised in vain, I seek no vengeance, plot no evil against thee. Between thee and me, the scale hangs fairly balanced. But, Hester, the man lives who has wronged us both! Who is he?' [8].*

The second sin which took the form of a social moral deviation is depicted when he appeared at the scaffold in chapter 3. He tried to reach his goals at the cost of sacrificing his fellow man. It is a social violation of others rights to reach one's goals, and to take revenge based on the personal and partial judgments:

*"Speak, woman!" said another voice, coldly and sternly, proceeding from the crowd about the scaffold, 'Speak; and give your child a father!'*

*"I will not speak!" answered Hester, turning pale as death, but responding to this voice, which she too surely recognized. 'And my child must seek a heavenly father; she shall never know an earthly one!'*

*'She will not speak!' murmured Mr. Dimmesdale, who, leaning over the balcony, with his hand upon his heart, had awaited the result of his appeal. He now drew back with a long respiration. 'Wondrous strength and generosity of a woman's heart! She will not speak!' Discerning the impracticable state of the poor culprit's mind, the elder clergyman, who had carefully prepared himself for the occasion, addressed to the multitude a discourse on sin, in all its branches, but with continual reference to the ignominious letter. So forcibly did he dwell upon this symbol, for the hour or more during which is periods were rolling over the people's heads, that it assumed new terrors in their imagination, and seemed to derive its scarlet hue from the flames of the infernal pit" [2].*

Hawthorne has regarded this social moral deviation a very grave one. Wrong happens when he makes an

*"ingenious plan of conjoining himself with his wronger, living with him, living upon him; and while he pretends to minister to his hidden ailment and to sympathize with his pain, revels in his unsuspected knowledge of these things, and stimulates them by malignant arts" [13].*

The community of women standing to observe Hester were expecting greater amount a punishment and even they wanted harsher retribution than what was sentenced which is a symbol of an unsympathetic community of people which hypocritically hold judgmental attitude in such disorganized moral situations [11].

According to [7], in "The Scarlet Letter:

*"sin has been treated on both sides – as an individualistic moral problem and on the social level as in the form of consequence and impact on the people of the society. In here Hawthorne holds a Christian view in regard with sin; that is sin itself as well as its effect on the society should be considered."* Hawthorne depicts three main characters simultaneously in one scene where Hester is suffering public shame and scorn, Dimmesdale who has concealed his participation in the sin is blaming himself inside; and Chillingworth is mad with the thought of revenge. This scene implies that reward and punishment are inevitable [7].

Reference [15] regards Hester as handling the guilt more successfully than Dimmesdale because her social conscience is less developed than his; because of this some critics regard her positively developing through the story. Hester faces the shame and ridicule of the unsympathetic society and according to [14], she has nothing more to face than the

*"slow years of ridicule and the stony path of regeneration."*

Over the years to come she gets engaged in the acts of social charity and affection to the other members of the society. She cares for the sick, the poor, and the dying. This is what might have been in the mind of the author in regard with the effect of sin on the development of the personal character of the doer which in many cases shows itself in social acts.

According to [14], Hester's guilt is pardoned through her public shame and suffering. Her will power and attempt to compensate for the past changed her and transformed her emblem of shame into a symbol of regained nobility.

Hawthorne writes,"

*"... in the lapse of the toilsome, thoughtful, and self-devoted years that made up Hester's life, the scarlet letter ceased to be a stigma which attracted the world's scorn and bitterness, and became a type of something to be sorrowed over, and looked upon with awe, yet with reverence And, as Hester Prynne had no selfish ends, nor lived in any measure for her own profit and enjoyment, people brought all their sorrows and perplexities, and besought her counsel, as one who had herself gone through a mighty trouble. Women, more especially—in the continually recurring trials of wounded, wasted, wronged, misplaced, or erring and sinful passion—or with the dreary burden of a heart unyielded, because unvalued and unsought came to Hester's cottage, demanding why they were so wretched, and what the remedy! Hester comforted and counseled them, as best she might" [8].*

Hawthorne emphasizes on the confession of a sin and repentance, for it releases the sinner's mind and prepares his/her for the development and transformation; for Hawthorne, the act of concealment which is introductory to cherish more sins will cause destruction and death. Dimmesdale, during

seven years of silence is feeling remorse regarding the sin he had committed and his situation gets worse by the passage of the time. The sense of guilt fades his mental and physical health away and puts him under the threat of death. Reference [15] observes:

*"Grief, anxiety, discontent, remorse, guilt, distrust, all tend to break down the life forces and to invite decay and death"*

Reference [15], on the destroying effect of sin, writes: *"The breach which guilt has once made into the human soul is never, in this mortal state, repaired. It may be watched and guarded; so that the enemy shall not force his way again into the citadel, and might even, in his subsequent assaults, select some other avenue, in preference to that where he had formerly succeeded. But there is still the ruined wall, and near it, the stealthy tread of the foe that would win over again his unforgotten triumph"*.

Another theme regarding morality in the society is the isolation the characters suffer from as the result of their sin they committed. According to [7], Pearl was a person who was born as an outcast at war with the outside world. Throughout her life in the Puritan community, Hester lived at the edge of the village; years later when pearl is married, she returns to the same spot to finish her life [7]. The scarlet letter A was a spell which took her out of the community because of the sin she had committed. The same type of isolation brought on Chillingworth by his guilt which is represented by his fearsome appearance he has grown in the village, and Dimmesdale was isolated in his own self suffering from what had had done [1].

We admire Hester for her courage to reveal and admit her sin; we blame Dimmesdale for the concealment of his guilt for a long time before he could confess. Chillingworth's comments reveal the importance of Dimmesdale's confession:

*"Hadst thou sought the whole earth over, there was no one place so secret, neither high place nor lowly place, where thou couldst have escaped me,--save on this very scaffold.*

*"Thanks be to Him who hath led me hither!" answered the minister. Yet he trembled, and turned to Hester, with an expression of doubt and anxiety in his eyes, not the less evidently betrayed, that there was a feeble smile upon his lips.*

*"Is not this better," murmured he, "than what we dreamed of in the forest?"*

*"I know not! I know not!" she hurriedly replied "Better? Yea; so we may both die, and little Pearl die with us!"*

*"For thee and Pearl, be it as God shall order," said the minister; "and God is merciful! Let me now do the will which He hath made plain before my sight. For, Hester, I am a dying man. So let me make haste to take my shame upon me!" [8].*

For Dimmesdale, salvation and grace come when he casts off the gown of hypocrisy and shows his real personality. Hawthorne wants to convey that regeneration, victory, and salvation come after confession of sin. What Hawthorne tries to imply is the fact that individualistic sin has direct effect on the social health of the community in which its members are living. These members do not find salvation, unless they try to purify their souls and try to be moral toward each other. For

Hawthorne, individualistic moral matters lead to social moral salvation.

### III. THE HOUSE OF SEVEN GABLES

Another novel Hawthorne wrote to present individualistic moral matters and how they affect on social situation of the community members is "The House of Seven Gables". Of course this novel does not portray the moralistic matters as artistically as "The Scarlet Letter" does. Nor in any way is it more artistically proportionate, compact and much weaker in its sustained power:

"There are many differences between *The Scarlet Letter* and *The House of the Seven Gables*. More than any other of his novels, *The House of the Seven Gables* seems attuned to the American life engaged with various social, economic, and technological phenomena. The novel makes significant use of mesmerism and daguerreotype, but it also features class conflicts, business and political intrigue, and a serious engagement with questions of gender identities and roles for both men and women [2].

It is a work elaborated in intellectual leisure, with more rational coloring and less intensity of life, yet it is much closer to the realities of life. Hawthorne here tried to illustrate the function of moral laws in the modern life in New England. "The House of Seven Gables" is revolving around the providential retribution for the unrightfully gained property, with a small look at the issue of aristocracy and democracy. It is also making considerable use of mesmerism and daguerreotype, as well as depicting class conflict, business and political intrigue, delving into the questions of gender and the role of men and women in the society:

*"When Holgrave and Phoebe return to the house and search for Hepzibah and Clifford, they have fallen in love: The bliss which makes all things true, beautiful, and holy shone around this youth and maiden." The daguerreotype, another example of the intersection between light and shadow, is an extremely important symbol within the novel*" [2].

In "The House of Seven Gables", Hawthorne displays a multigenerational conflict over property and human values. The behavior and the social positions of Pyncheon and Maule families change constantly. Each generation has villains - Matthew Maule the wizard, Matthew Maule the carpenter, and Colonel Pyncheon, victims - Alice Pyncheon and Clifford Pyncheon, and characters whose actions reconcile two families- Holgrave and Phoebe. It also represents the concept of The Sins of Father:

*"The wrong-doing of one generation lives into the successive ones, and, divesting itself of every temporary advantage, becomes a pure and uncontrollable mischief; this is the leading idea of Hawthorne's new romance, and it is developed with even more than his usual power. The error in 'The Scarlet Letter,' proceeded from the divorce of its humor from its pathos—the introduction being as genial as Goldsmith or Lamb, and the story which followed being tragic even to ghastliness. In 'The House of the Seven Gables,' the humor and the pathos are combined, and the whole work is*

*stamped with the individuality of the author's genius, in all its variety of power"* [1].

According to Richard Folge (1964), this novel is depicting the theme of American original sin and its gradual atonement in the course of time [24]. Evert Augustus Duyckinck, writing in *Literary World* as quoted by [6], views the house as having one gable for each deadly sin. He found it a:

*"ghostly, mouldy abode, built in some eclipse of the sun . . . founded on a grave and inviting "wrath supernal. Inside, he found every darker shadow of human life, with passions allied to crime. Within the house, wealth withers and the human heart grows cold. Sunshine cast its rays in, but only to show us the darkness. Despite this melancholy view of the book, he found the scenes and vivid descriptions dramatic and truthful. He saw, in Hawthorne, clear streaks of his Puritan ancestry"* [6].

The dominant theme in "The House of the Seven Gables" is that wrong and retribution, as well as sin and suffering, would be carried on to the next generations. In fact he is emphasizing on the impact of individualistic moral deviations not only on the contemporary society of people, but also, on the generations next to come. The novel states that the wrongdoing of one generation survives into the next successive generations until it becomes an uncontrollable wrong. In the preface to the novel, Hawthorne hopes that this world might warn people against gathering "ill-gotten gold, or real states," and leaving them to the next innocent generations. In fact, he is expressing worry over the commitment of those individualistic moral wrong doings which may have social and collective consequences on others or even the descendants to come [16].

In the novel, Hepzibah's embarrassed feeling, when she discovers that her customers "evidently considered themselves not merely her equals, but her patrons and superiors" and after her first day on the job, this "decayed gentelwoman "comes to some

*"disagreeable conclusion as to the temper and manners of what she termed the lower class, whom, she had looked down upon with a gentle and pity , as herself occupying a sphere of unquestionable superiority. But, unfortunately, she had likewise to struggle against a bitter emotion of a directly opposite kind: a sentiment of virulence, we mean, towards the idle aristocracy to which it had so recently been her pride to belong. When a lady, in a delicate and costly summer garb, with a floating veil and gracefully swaying gown, and, altogether, an ethereal lightness that made you look at her beautifully slippered feet, to see whether she trod on the dust or floated in the air,—when such a vision happened to pass through this retired street, leaving it tenderly and delusively fragrant with her passage, as if a bouquet of tea-roses had been borne along, —then again, it is to be feared, old Hepzibah's scowl could no longer vindicate itself entirely on the plea of near-sightedness"* [16].

Here, one of Hawthorne's purposes is to depict social forces at work in American society which coincides with the rise of business, manufacturing, increasingly wealthy middle class people. Hepzibah for example, quickly finds herself having

double identification [1]. Suddenly as a member of the shopkeeper's class, she looks with scorn at the "idle aristocracy"—at one woman in particular, whose "delicate and costly summer garb" and "slipperd feet" make her look as if she is floating down the street:

*"For what good end," Hepzibah wonders bitterly, "in the wisdom of Providence, does that woman live! Must the whole world toil, that the palms of her hands may be kept white and delicate?" [16].*

For all of its surrounding nineteenth-century life, "The House of the Seven Gables" shows more signs of the romance elements, especially of character, that Hawthorne had already relied upon and would use again in his next novels. One of the most important elements is the heroine, Phoebe Pyncheon. In his late novels, Hawthorne would double his main female characters, emphasizing to the conventional contrast between dark and light women. Phoebe Pyncheon derives from the latter type, and has the nickname, Phoebe, which Hawthorne used for Sophia. In contrast to female characters who challenge social boundaries, Phoebe is contained and self-contained, a model of conformity. She is:

*"orderly and obedient to common rules" (2: 68) and "shocked no canon of taste; she was admirably in keeping with herself, and never jarred against surrounding circumstances In fact, Phoebe purifies the space around her of anything unpleasant. Although her room in the Pyncheon house was once a "chamber of very great and varied experience" – births, deaths, and the "joy of bridal nights" that had "throbbd" away there – Phoebe transforms it into a "maiden's bed-chamber" that has been "purified of all former evil and sorrow by her sweet breath and happy thoughts" [2].*

Hawthorne displays Holgrave as a potential interesting character, who was very different from Arthur Dimmesdale in "The Scarlet letter". In the tension between Pyncheons and Maules, class conflict plays an important role. Holgrave comes from a working class background. "I was not born a gentleman," he insists to Hepzibah; "neither have I lived like one". Holgrave is a symbol of the democratization and social leveling in the American nineteenth century society. Hawthorne pays attention to the class level forces happening to American community and the potential individualistic and social moral problem it may bring about [6]. Holgrave is also a symbol of the nineteenth century opportunists who were created in the social structure of the time. The contrast between Hepzibah, who feels "the sordid stain" from the first coin she had received in her shop "could never be washed away her palm", and Holgrave who seems comfortable in a community which increasingly values the business type man shows the change the American society was undergoing. Hawthorne tried to depict Holgrave as a social reformer, who tries to have public performance and marketing ability, something which Hawthorne lacked in his personal life [17].

In every novel, except "The House of Seven Gables", there is a female character as a symbol of reform and radicalism. Holgrave, a male Herster, has the energy but denies the action. He proves himself in different areas. He is a mesmerist through which Hawthorn tries to comment on a popular

nineteenth century craze which he warns against. What he is referring to in "The House of Seven gables" as well as In "The Blithedale Romance" remind us of his favorite theme, the sanctity of the individuality, something he tries to express as human heart. In the forest scene in "The Scarlet Letter", for example, Hester and Dimmesdale accuse Chillingworth of violating, "in cold blood, the sanctity of a human heart," while they appreciate themselves that they "never did so." Then follows the expression by Hester, "What we did had a consecration of its own" [8]. Hester's claim that adultery has a "consecration" of its own suggests that, unlike Chillingworth's efforts to penetrate Dimmesdale's heart, sexuality brings people into "closer communion" unconsecrated [2].

In discovering himself as an artist, Holgrave is expressed as a lover-violator of the woman who is the ideal "reader" of his story, that one heart and mind of a sympathy so perfect that

In "the House of Seven Gables", too, mesmerism has a sexual aspect to it, but Hawthorne carefully distinguishes between good and bad sexual experience – consecrated and she actually regulates her breathing by his. Holgrave can reveal himself to be a (reformed, non-vengeful) Maule. Having proven himself a man who respects women, he can marry Phoebe. Love, not mesmeric power, will be the medium of their marriage [17].

Placing Holgrave in the position of sacrificing his radical ideas and force of character for a woman and a conventional relationship also means re-defining him as a conventional man. As Chris Castiglia (2004) points out, the "transfer of power" to Holgrave that occurs at the end of the novel:

*"symbolizes the triumph, in the decades just before Hawthorne wrote The House of the Seven Gables ,of reform movements that targeted inner characteristics over the coercive man-dates of external law"[18].*

Holgrave proves himself to be a "good guy" when he refused to seduce Phoebe With his mesmeric power. Holgrave uses another of his arts – daguerreotypy– to exact revenge upon Jaffrey for his predacious exploitation of others. In here, Hawthorne takes revenge upon a particularly greedy picture of nineteenth-century manhood [2].

Reference [19], in "Hawthorne's House of Three Stories," observes that the novel is about the "loss of the self." This is what happens in the traditional yet changing society, as well as in the face of reality. He refers to Clifford's remark:

*'We are ghosts! We have no right among living beings—no right anywhere but in this old house, which has a curse on it, and which, therefore, we are doomed to haunt!'" [19].*

He and Hepzibah do not change due to the old age, and they are ultimately limited to their own natures and traditions. They have their own world of "enduring reverie" [19]. Holgrave, on the other hand, is allowed to escape from both the Maule past and the Pyncheon past [6]. He is free to exercises his intellect, art, magic, and science; and Phoebe is not really included in the Holgrave's world. In the shop, however, she invites "commerce with everyday life." It is significant that the Maules and the Pyncheons leave the house together, as they have lived together. As [19] puts it, this ending represents a "modest chance to start over," though not to escape evil

completely. The novel ends on a note of “cautious, plausible human hope.” This constitutes part of Hawthorne’s social moral concern over the nineteenth century man.

#### IV. THE BLITHEDALE ROMANCE

“The Blithedale Romance” is based on the personal experience Nathaniel Hawthorne gained living at transcendentalist Brook Farm of Agriculture and Education in west Roxbury in 1841. Brook Farm was established by American social reformer and literary critique George Ripely. He translated many German theologians’ works which caused him form the idea of American transcendentalism. In April 1841, Ripely and 20 other members of the transcendental club moved to Brook farm, a property about 20 miles away from Boston. (Companion to Hawthorne) Ripley as the president of the Farm hoped that they would establish “Christ ideal society” and the members were to engage in agriculture and education [20].

Hawthorne bought stock in brook Farm but lived there only from April to November 1841. Considering his introverted, private, and conservative personality, Hawthorne did not find such a communal life appealing [21].

The novel is essentially a “satire against social reformers,” as [21] observes it. Reference [22] terms the work as:

*“Psychological roman à clef . . . a book about male friendship and mesmerism, utopian idealism and erotic women, women authors and passive men, none of them able to confront precisely what they want” [22].*

Reference [23] observes that much of Hawthorne’s attitude toward life is written into the “Blithedale Romance”. He depicts himself as a shy, silent, and self absorbed member of the community of Brook farm. What he found in the community was a “position of new hostility, rather than new brotherhood”. According to [23], Hawthorne’s tendency to isolation was the main cause for his leaving Brook Farm, while considering it as no considerable victory for the idea of socialism [22].

According to [23], Hawthorne deliberately bases his romance away from the general trend of life while showing a concern over the forces that hinder personal development. He admits that love is present in the novel, but that it is dominated by other forces. He feels that the characters, which are all affected by some individualistic moral vices like pride and selfishness, are unable to communicate with one another, and this impedes their formation of a humane community [22].

Reference [23] also observes what he feels as the main problem in character in the novel:

*“Coverdale, the narrator, becomes hard as an uninvolved and indifferent observer; Hollingsworth has a capacity for affection but sets up philanthropy in its place and makes it the sole object of his life, which destroys his worth as a man; Zenobia, the beautiful dark heroine - woman, is driven by her pride to compete with men, which takes her away from a normal position to the point that she loses her proper position regard with others; Priscilla, the mysterious maiden, who does not have a substantial character and is, therefore, easily destroyed between the strong forces of Hollingsworth and*

*Zenobia, both symbols for Selfishness and pride; Westervelt, the mesmerist, destroys any spiritual growth due to his skepticism; and Old Moodie, the father of Zenobia and Priscilla, has a very superficial and flimsy character.*

According to [23], Hawthorne thinks of personal tragedy as a product of outside forces, believing that free choice is so limited that it can be lost if it is ever used incorrectly. The first errant step is the planting of the evil seed, after which everything follows, and in many cases these following moral downward steps lead to more disastrous predicaments in terms of social relations and attitudes members of a society may take toward each other [23].

Reference [24] considers the novel in his study called “Hawthorne’s Fiction: The Light & the Dark”. He regards the communal relationship among the characters as artificial. This leads to the proposition that the misguided attempt to reunite body and soul is a failure and cannot take place in an ordinary social environment:

*“The Blithedale Romance” views the reality from a distance and this help the work achieve its effect; through presenting moral issues such as skepticism vs. faith and materialism vs. idealism; and the two main themes through which Hawthorne tries to reach his goal are the human heart and what he got as the result of his stay at Brook Farm. Hawthorne wisely realizes that “in the nature of the world, the death of this project was inevitable, yet the attempt has enlarged the boundaries of the human spirit” [24].*

One major theme under the focus is materialism which exerts great influence on the characters and at the same time on the whole trend of the novel. Westervelt- or simply western world- is the symbol of evil disguised as the materialism. He is the character who reflects the superficiality of life which has replaced the reality – e.g. his good looking false teeth and his obsession with the materialistic life and rejecting moral basis in personal life which leads to his “unpardonable sin” which is the violation of individual heart (Priscilla) are good examples. He is always carrying Hawthorne’s traditional symbol for Satan, the walking stick, and as a satanic figure he finally deceives Zenobia who is a symbol of, yet, another moral problem. Zenobia cannot adapt herself for the real life and is too proud of her perfection. She judges merely by appearance and falls for a heartless fancy [6].

One human disadvantage is lacking a deep knowledge of his own. This is what makes Hollingsworth considerable. He as a reformer does not know himself enough to let his reason direct him.

He thinks his proud egotism as love of his fellow man. One individualistic moral concern which is leading him is his devilish perversion of spirit which causes him to sin against all members of community by pursuing his selfish interests; again the effect of individualistic moral weakness on the social moral behavior is to be considered.

According to [25] what Hawthorne is trying to criticize is the mid-nineteenth century American attempt at transformation. What was threatened by such a movement could affect the moral basis of the society. For [25] such a moral conversion must be a very tragic experience. Hawthorne

had deep concern over the moral basis of the society. He tried to analyze whatever threatening factor, historically or contemporarily, which might have even the slightest effect upon the formation of the American morality which was itself a heritage of Puritanism. One of the outcomes of such a transformation in the society was what Hawthorne called it as a masquerade. He observes life as a masquerade and the mankind generally as performers. Male also notes the pattern of withdrawal and concealment in the novel. Hawthorne frequently uses the veil in his depiction of a masquerade apart from real life. Male contends that each character wears his/her own mask, whether it be a tangible drape or another device, such as Hollingsworth's guise of philanthropy. At one point, Zenobia tells him:

*"It is all self!" answered Zenobia with still intenser bitterness. "Nothing else; nothing but self, self, self! The fiend, I doubt not, has made his choicest mirth of you these seven years past, and especially in the mad summer which we have spent together. I see it now! I am awake, disenchanted, disenthralled! Self, self, self! You have embodied yourself in a project. You are a better masquerader than the witches and gypsies yonder; for your disguise is a self-deception. See whither it has brought you! First, you aimed a death-blow, and a treacherous one, at this scheme of a purer and higher life, which so many noble spirits had wrought out. Then, because Coverdale could not be quite your slave, you threw him ruthlessly away. And you took me, too, into your plan, as long as there was hope of my being available, and now fling me aside again, a broken tool!" [25].*

According to Male the name "Blithedale" itself is ironic. It refers to a group called "Happy Valley", symbolizing an effort to change man's mind without changing his heart, and this was one of the main reasons of their failure. The regeneration theme occurs over and over with allusions to constant seasonal changes in contrast to weak human efforts but all in vain [25].

Reference [25] refers to the idea that throughout the novel, no redemption occurs as it does in "The Scarlet letter" and he regards "The Marble Faun", as the most pessimistic novel. Here the concept of reformation takes a dominant upper hand, and even sexual passion is sacrificed to it. Because of this we see no moral growth, as we do in "The Scarlet Letter", resulting in a pastoral wasteland as [25] prefers to call it. Hawthorne, based on his failed experience of Brook Farm tried to depict the idea that members of a utopian communities need to undergo a change of heart and are willing to return to God with pure human soul. They should repent from their sins from deep heart and the redemption coming from the institutions is not enough. Reference [31] in his biography of Hawthorne observes that "The Blithedale Romance "deals more deeply into the moral realism of human being. Hawthorne goes more deeply into his view regarding human nature. He illustrates the impossibility of real human change from evil to virtue through artificial customs and culture. For Hawthorne, Transcendentalists are mistaken in pretending to have understood the nature of human moral problems. His remarks regarding the reformer Hollingsworth makes it clear that Hawthorne rejects the appeal to the "higher nature "of a

sinner. Reference [26] in "A Study of Hawthorne", written only twelve years after Hawthorne's death, contends that *Blithedale* shows the author's insight into the deep mistake of reformers who forget that the center of every true reform is the heart.

Reference [26] regards a higher tragedy to "The Blithedale Romance" than "The Scarlet Letter". For him what the novel tries to illustrate is moral affection, That is to say that, moral deviation caused by the affection among human beings in a way that is away from the right path, e.g. Zenobia and Hollingsworth are hollow characters who crash at the first temptation. Zenobia falls in love with herself and Hollingsworth has lost his hope at the end.

Reference [27] feels that the theme of the work is the tragedy originated from a "monomania of egotism" or the idea that an ideal brings man to a good end only if he keeps to the natural order of life. Otherwise moral deviations are likely to occur in the society as a result of individualistic moral problems. Hawthorne tries to illustrate a series of "veil" images found throughout the story. Coverdale's supposed impertinence in spying on the others is a veil spun by Zenobia, who herself wears a mask of privacy. Priscilla seems to hear voices that are hidden from the others. Old Moodie wears an eye-patch behind which he hides. Westervelt is disguised in various ways. Hawthorne uses other veil images, such as the curtains in Zenobia's city apartment, the masquerade in the woods, the river's secret, and the man with a handkerchief over his face. These veils refer to hypocrisy, amoral vice which is itself a source for many other moral deviations. Hawthorne seems to suggest that all people wear masks of some kind.

## V. THE MARBLE FAUN

Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Marble Faun" is one of his finest works. It is a complex and excellent work of literature. The book combines an intricate, murder-mystery plot with a romantic setting. Rather than having a single protagonist and antagonist, Hawthorne creates four characters, each receiving equal attention. These four characters are also artists. "The Marble Faun" tells about three Americans encountering evil in Rome, Italy. The tone of this novel has an air of "Victorian Morality;

*"The publication of the novel in America in 1860 coincided with the tumultuous events that would culminate in the Civil War. He sees the novel as a "valuable index to this transitional moment in American cultural consciousness." He interprets it as a study of disorientation, based as it is on the experience of Americans on unfamiliar ground. It prefigures later novelists' exploration of the "international theme," especially Henry James's, and of the debate about romance versus realism in American fiction. It is of special significance because it helped "mold the imaginations and purposes" of William Dean Howells, Mark Twain, and Henry James She suggests that a "Victorian air of moralism" marks the novel and argues that Hawthorne's "aesthetic observations" and "descriptive digressions" impede the narrative. At the same*

time, Bell observes that it was as close to a best-seller as Hawthorne achieved" [6].

"The Marble Faun" is also much concerned with Italian art, at least with sculpture; this fact and also the circumstance that historic spots are picturesquely described have made something of a glorified guide-book of the romance. This story is also a psychological one; thus, it deals with the development of a soul under the influence of a committed sin. Hawthorne also uses numerous representations of the characters as inanimate objects to convey their psychological progress:

"While most critics emphasize the moral aspects of *"The Faun's Transformation"* (the title Hawthorne gives to the pivotal chapter 19), Hawthorne also represents a psychological and physical metamorphosis in which gender and sexuality come violently together. He does not represent a closeted homoeroticism in Donatello so much as he explores a male subjectivity not constructed in relation to any gendered object until, that is, the traumatic murder scene on the Tarpeian Rock. Donatello's youthful sexuality, which does not seem to be directed at any single love object, is heterosexualized through the murder that Miriam encourages him to commit. Donatello grows up almost spontaneously into a heterosexual male in the act of murdering another man – violently repressing the possibility of homoerotic desire and so transforming himself into a man who instantaneously enjoys a "union," born in passion, "cemented with blood," and marked by increasing "loathsomeness" (4: 175), with the woman for whom he has killed this other man" [2].

In "The Marble Faun", Hawthorne observes a problem which is almost an obsession of the modern man. This problem is the issue of man's moral status in what seems to be meaningless world. What "The Marble Faun" tries to explore is the consequences of man's alienation and strangeness from the humanity, God, and nature. These are the basic moral problems man faces on the individualistic and social levels of his life [28].

The actions of three major characters form the structure and the theme of the romance. Hilda, Miriam, Donatello, and Kenyon are transformed by a fall from relative innocence into a world of suffering. Donatello transforms from faun to a man is the most striking of all. All four characters benefit from their experience in Rome, although they are not of the same rank from the view point of maturity. For Hawthorne all men are brothers; this is demonstrated by the experiences of the four major characters in "The Marble Faun". They are involved with the responsibility of the actions they commit and have to accept the consequence of their actions. They are involved with humanity. Hawthorne's deep concern for humanity and the moral issues surrounding human beings in the society that has made "The Marble Faun" makes it a work of everlasting importance in human civilization and social matters [17].

According to [28], as Hawthorne defines Romance fiction, it is a form of skeptical inquiry. "The Marble Faun" asks about a central question of how do I know the world exists and how do I know that I exist in it? The romance asks this question in

order to demonstrate the difficulty of such moral judgments as human beings are required to make in regard with ourselves and others [28]. The Marble Faun" also demonstrates the difficulty of knowing the world and thereby to produce the proper moral pressure to make decisions in lack of absolute knowledge that Hawthorne's fiction divert toward the historical and the supernatural, sometimes both: for the past, more vividly than the present, impresses upon us an awareness that reality is literally unknowable and unverifiable [29].

In this work, Hawthorne provides us with a complicated answer to the dilemma of acting morally within an unknowable, uncertain and "mysterious" reality, which is the subject of most romance fictions:

"It is justifiable for a romancer to sting the curiosity of his readers with a mystery, only on the implied obligation to explain it at last; but this story begins in mystery only to end in mist. The suggestive faculty is tormented rather than genially excited, and in the end is left a prey to doubts. The central idea of the story, the necessity of sin to convert such a creature as Donatello into a moral being, is also not happily illustrated in the leading event. When Donatello kills the wretch who malignantly dogs the steps of Miriam, all readers think that Donatello committed no sin at all; and the reason is, that Hawthorne has deprived the persecutor of Miriam of all human attributes, made him an allegorical representation of one of the most fiendish forms of unmixt evil, so that we welcome his destruction with something of the same feeling with which, in following the allegory of Spenser or Bunyan, we rejoice in the hero's victory over the Blatant Beast or Giant Despair" [17].

The moral dilemma depicted in Hawthorne's novels is related with maintaining a self-conscious knowledge of the uncertainty of physical phenomena and therefore the subjectivity of all human understanding. In other words, by making ourselves into philosophical skeptics, aware of the uncertainty of the world and the uncertainty of our judgments, and yet recognizing that we need to act in that world by principles both ethical and intellectual, whether or not they are founded on provable evidences, we at very least proceed with a kind of caution and tolerance that may well spell the difference between moral, social, and political tyranny, on the one hand (such as the Puritans represent), and, on the other, generosity and goodness [17].

One of the most characteristic features of "The Marble Faun" is that in the Romance we see no villains as major protagonists. There is of course the Model, who is the origin of Miriam's suffering in the tale and her tormentor, the model (as it was) of all torment and distress. It is the Model who finally becomes her or more precisely Donatello's victim. But the Model plays a minor role and is kept largely aside for most of the story, even before he is killed:

"Miriam even makes her paintings come true in the world of the novel. She gains revenge upon the model that persecutes her by convincing Donatello to kill him. With more freedom than Hester or Zenobia, Miriam is able to create an art object that expresses herself – fulfilling the ideal Hawthorne had established for the most creative women, of coming before the

world “stark naked” *The portrait represents a beautiful woman, such as one sees only two or three, if even so many, in all a lifetime; so beautiful, that she seemed to get into your consciousness and memory, and could never afterwards be shut out, but haunted your dreams, for pleasure or for pain; holding your inner realm as a conquered territory, though without deigning to make herself at home there*” [2].

In “The Marble Faun” we see no world of Puritan clergy and colonial governors, no fanatical religious types as in “The scarlet letter”, no power-hungry liars or manipulators like Judge Pyncheon or Westervelt or even misconceived social reformers like Holgrave or Coverdale [17]. Rather the major protagonists are four rather friendly, good hearted young people, three of whom are artists, all of whom get trapped not by the conspiracies and mal intentions of others but by their own failure simply to listen to and sympathize with and help one another – not materially but emotionally and psychologically. Hawthorne depicts the lack of sympathy as their moral deviation, an individualistic moral deviation which leads to the complicated social situation. Indeed, these young artists cannot understand their situations. They are poor interpreters of the tradition of painting and sculpture to which they themselves contribute their considerable talents. “The Marble Faun” is essentially a story of missed moral opportunities, of moments when ordinary human beings might in very simple ways have eased each other’s paths through life. It is also the story of the failure of art, and of how that failure is implicit in the limitations of human beings and their creative powers [30].

Hawthorne’s moral concern with the mythical fall of man – the alienation and strangeness with God and nature – which is demonstrated in “The Marble Faun” resembles the fall from faith experienced during the Nineteenth century. Hawthorne was not an orthodox Christian and his view of the fall was not quite similar to that of Milton whom he admired. He believed that man’s judge would be himself and the punishment of his sins would be the perception of them [31]. As [32] observes the unpardonable sin is not the denial of God, but the denial of man. Humanity or the humane relationship between members of a society would make a society a humane place to live. The most important concern Hawthorne had in mind was that an idea might become more important than human being- as in such case a Hollingworth may get created. For Hawthorne, heaven exists in the heart of man as its path leads through his heart [33].

In “The Marble Faun” Hilda’s attempt to deny her humanity in the isolation of her tower is unsuccessful and she finally finds that she should descend into the streets; which is an emphasis on the importance of social life for human being. The symbol which Hawthorne uses consistently to demonstrate humanity’s bond is the symbol of heart which shows the man’s mortality and of his ties to the natural world. The head shows that part of man which is not found in the rest of the nature- that is to say the man’s connection to Providence [32]. In an article “Hawthorne’s Psychology of the Head and Heart,” [27] observes the consequence of this apparent duality in man’s nature. He believes that in “The

Marble Faun”, Hawthorne presents two solutions to the problem of life. Each of these two ways entails its own cost and rewards. If man is going to develop and get the noble qualities of mind, heart and recognition and get a deep insight into the true problem of human existence, he should sin; face isolation and lose whatever happiness he can get as the result of that sin. On the other hand, he may search his earthly bliss and forget his individuality and becomes anonymous in an ordinary life. According to [27] Hawthorne believes that the former solution would bring man to a true moral development. This development is the consequence of redemption and atonement which gives the human soul an extra capacity to ascend and a deeper insight to see the truth.

In “The Marble Faun”, Hawthorne is presenting choices by showing us the characters and their inner inclinations. Donatello and Miriam are after the heart; Kenyon and Hilda are searching their way to the head. Kenyon tells Hilda that

*“ I will own to you- when I think of the original cause of Donatello and Miriam’s crime, the motive, the feelings, the sudden concurrences of circumstances thrusting them onward, the urgency of the moment, and the sublime unselfishness on either part- I know not well how to distinguish it from that the world calls heroism. Might we not render some such verdict as this? – Worthy of death, but not unworthy of love”* [34].

## VI. CONCLUSION

In Hawthorne’s view, the balance between head and heart must be achieved and kept. In “The Scarlet Letter”, and again in “The Marble Faun”, Hawthorne suggests that sin, for all its consequences, may have an enlightening influence upon certain natures: although it burns, it wakens. Perhaps our regeneration is impossible without sin’s agency [1]. “Is Sin, then—which we deem such a fearful blackness in the universe—” he makes Kenyon speculate in “The Marble Faun” —“is it, like Sorrow, merely an element of human education, through which we struggle to a higher and purer state than we could otherwise have attained? Did Adam fall that we might ultimately rise to a loftier paradise than his?” [34].

What Hawthorne tried to find was the root of social immorality in the individualistic moral vices. He criticizes harsh behavior of the society with sinners who have the capacity of atonement of return to virtuousness. He was a social moralist who forcefully showed his concern over the moral fall of mankind in case the individualistic moral matters are trespassed. For him, society was a basic foreground on which individuals could find suitable culture to grow morally healthy, so according to his line of thinking, society is the foremost important aspect of human life, since all moral behaviors lead to the moral health of the individuals. This seems why, in all his novels, Hawthorne depicted the direct relationship between man and his community. For him, individualistic moral matters are means to reach social moral prosperity. He believed in a moral society which consisted of morally healthy individuals, who should try to keep personal morality at their best, to have a morally healthy situation to grow.

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