1970

The affinity of theme and technique in the novels of Nathaniel Hawthorne and Bernard Malamud

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THE AFFINITY OF THEME AND TECHNIQUE
IN THE NOVELS OF NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE AND BERNARD MALAMUD

by

Carol Katoski Cook

A Thesis Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

Major Subject: English

Signatures have been redacted for privacy

Iowa State University
Of Science and Technology
Ames, Iowa

1970
Others taunt me with having knelt at well-curbs
Always wrong to the light, so never seeing
Deeper down in the well than where the water
Gives me back in a shining surface picture
Me myself in the summer heaven godlike
Looking out of a wreath of fern and cloud puffs.
Once, when trying with chin against a well-curb,
I discerned, as I thought, beyond the picture,
Through the picture, a something white, uncertain,
Something more of the depths — and then I lost it.
Water came to rebuke the too clear water.
One drop fell from a fern, and lo, a ripple
Shook whatever it was lay there at bottom,
Blurred it, blotted it out. What was that whiteness?
Truth? A pebble of quartz? For once, then, something.

—Robert Frost
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INTRODUCTION

Few Americans have achieved such an unquestioned place in our literary culture as Nathaniel Hawthorne. Regardless of the flaws which can be attributed to him because of his supposed lack of realistic detail and characters who remain remote and unalive regardless of elaborate description, his art mirrors a mind especially attuned to the conflicts between the ideal and the real which are basic to the American experience. Time has not radically altered this basic experience nor the perception of it that chooses the borderline between the objective and the imaginary as the proper domain of the fictionist's pen. Approximately one hundred years after publication of Hawthorne's best work we find another American novelist and short-story writer, Bernard Malamud, not only preoccupied in a similar way with "the inner reality of American life" but also often accentuating or symbolizing his theme in imagery reminiscent of that earlier American voice. The theme which the two most hold in common is suggested by such terms as "alienation," "guilt," "identity crisis," "self-confrontation." Both Hawthorne and Malamud write of characters who are isolated, often guilt-ridden, who should or must seek to confront themselves and find their true identities in order to find either personal peace or a place in society -- or both. In action and thought this theme often resolves itself into a basic concern of life and literature -- the appearance-reality conflict. This conflict is highlighted in both by a most appropriate image -- the mirror.

To reach an understanding of the affinity of theme and technique in the works of these two writers, I wish to concentrate on the first two
novels of both men: Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) and *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851) and Malamud's *The Natural* (1952) and *The Assistant* (1957). It is both appropriate and necessary, however, to first examine the motivations, the background, which has been partly responsible for making them literary brothers. Since literature inescapably "has a relationship to social and intellectual history ... as symbolic illumination," we will first take a cursory look at some facets in our history which have contributed to the development of an American spirit which is contradictory and fragmented, which is unsure of itself and its aspirations. It is this spirit or "inner reality," present in all human souls but exaggerated in the American soul because of the lack of a unified tradition, which has moved many of our writers to use techniques and to create a tone which reflects a mood of desperation, conflict, and imprisonment in juxtaposition with a theme which emphasizes the need for love and a belief in human potential for personal betterment. Secondly, we should consider the personal involvement Hawthorne and Malamud have in the contradictory nature of the American spirit. No work of art exists completely distinct from the life of the artist who created it. The Puritan background of Hawthorne and the Jewish background of Malamud, as well as their sensitive perceptive natures, deepen their American sense of man's quest for his real and better self and man's constant failures in this quest. Finally, before investigating in depth one of the most notable and comparable literary connections between their themes and artistic techniques, the appearance-reality conflict as symbolized in mirror imagery, we will take note of several other similarities in technique related to their analogous position in the tradition of the American novel.
THE INNER REALITY

The existence of the similarity, yet to be elaborated, between
Hawthorne and Malamud is no accident; its occurrence is indicative that
there is, broadly speaking, a basic American experience. This experience
has been dwelt on by such authors as Richard Chase, Ihab Hassan, D.H.
Lawrence, R.W.B. Lewis, and Robert Spiller. In simplified language the
experience is the dichotomy between philosophy and action which has
subtly plagued our citizens since the first settlers and which has also
helped prod the creative and progressive impulses which made the nation
great. America came into existence because of the search for a "new
world," an escape to something better. Inherent in the promise of America
and in the contractual agreements made between her early government and
its people was a guarantee of life, liberty, and happiness -- and the
means to acquire the latter. Also implicit in the ideas of men like
Thomas Jefferson who helped build the system of democracy was a deep faith
in the integrity of the individual, almost a faith in the perfectibility
of the human spirit. America was the new Zion, the Promised Land which
not only offered the ideal life to all who would seek it but also saw
herself, in John Winthrop's words, as "a City upon a Hill [with] the eies
of all people ... upon us." Most future immigrants were to approach
the shores of this country with much the same spirit which combined a
desire for personal freedom and success with a sense of responsibility for
the destiny of the new society.

Already a problem appears because freedom and responsibility do
not naturally combine. And in yet more specific ways the ideals of
this freedom and promise differed with the facts. Life was endlessly hard for new settlers. While the ever present frontier offered freedom and demanded tough individualism, submission to external authority was necessary for the successful community building which was the first order of business. As early as 1637 the General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony "passed an order prohibiting anyone from settling within the colony without first having his orthodoxy approved by the magistrates" (Boorstin, 239). The common religion which enforced this conformity was Puritanism and its influence was to pervade the American experience. For the early American Puritans the Bible was the written law which covered the whole of existence and reason's place was to interpret and clarify -- but never to challenge. Though salvation was determined by "the sovereign freedom of God's pleasure," believers were to subject themselves to constant self-analysis so "they might reach a fair assurance of their own standing." The fall of man and his consequent and constant tendency toward evil was stressed and strong theological and social restraints were believed necessary for community survival and to help man keep the somewhat inexplicable covenant God had drawn with him. Richard Chase has labeled the Puritan influence as a "Manichean sensibility," enhanced by its wilderness setting ("the devil's territories") and adapted to an infant democracy ("sweet land of liberty"), which instilled in our culture the "grand metaphors of election and damnation, its opposition of the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness, and its eternal and autonomous contraries of good and evil" (Chase, 11). While in many ways the Puritan philosophy was necessary for survival in
the face of harsh and unpredictable realities and while its influence and somberness have sometimes been exaggerated, it was a major contributor to the contrariety of American life.

One result of this contrariety was a tension between the self and society which was only to be increased by an accelerating complexity of life and the continuing contradictions of experience. "Indian," "Negro," "Civil War," "conscription," and "censorship" are only a few of the key terms which haunt and disturb the American dream. Ihab Hassan has tried to sum up the problems of almost three and a half centuries of experience in America:

The American was both dreamer and rapist, builder of empires and misanthrope, Evangel and Faust. He envisaged a universal brotherhood yet he imposed his will ruthlessly on man and nature alike. To the individual he vouchsafed great liberties, and to the crowd he allowed oppressive powers. He was, therefore, at once lonely and gregarious, private and sociable. He honored the "natural man," the generosity of instinct rather than of the mind, yet the symbol of status and wealth became his measure. Too often an idealist at heart, he permitted his democratic denial of consciousness to bolster a pragmatic and materialistic temper and to nourish anti-intellectualism. Yet despite his frenzied will to conquer his environment, despite his eager conformity to a social norm, the American always put a high value on love, spirit and the unconditioned self.

By the middle of the twentieth century the individual in America was seeking as hard as ever to discover who he really was and should be and the American promise of material, and especially spiritual, happiness was still only a goal for many. Martin Luther King, in a speech made just before his death in 1968, spoke the hopes of more than the Negro race when he proclaimed, "We as a people will get to the Promised Land!"
To insinuate that all Americans have a conscious involvement in the "experience" discussed above would, of course, be absurd; it would be even more absurd to suggest that such dualities are absent in other cultures and other histories. It is even, in a sense, too great an abstraction to concentrate on the words "history" and "culture" because, while circumstance and environment greatly affect the life of a people, contradiction and conflict are basic to human nature. With these qualifications in mind it is still fair to say America is a land in which the friction between dream and reality has been especially felt and especially potent in influencing the lives of its individual people. Our artist, especially our writer, with his more sensitized nature and habits of close observation and analysis is likely to be most conscious and most consciously disturbed by the discrepancies in nature in general, and the American environment will deepen this awareness. It may be impossible to conceive of a disillusioned Puritan, as Perry Miller contends (60), but it is fairly easy to understand the partial but deep-seated disillusionment -- what Alfred Kazin calls "their deep and subtle alienation . . . on native grounds" -- in writers like Nathaniel Hawthorne and Bernard Malamud which moves their already skeptical natures to plumb the tragical, ambiguous depths of experience.

Hawthorne's own nature and personal heritage did much to develop his absorption in the conflicting facets in human nature and in American life -- and in the isolation which they engendered in the aware. A long period of his life, 1825 to 1837, was spent largely
alone in his room in Salem trying to become a writer. Not only were these years of self-imprisonment his writing apprenticeship but also a search for self-knowledge. "He was almost as much a puzzle to himself as he was to anyone else. He seemed, in fact, to be two men; and the one was constantly in the attitude of watching and commenting on the other." With one hand Hawthorne reached out for solitude but with the other often pushed aside his painful loneliness and turned to the companionship of warm friends such as Franklin Pierce and Horatio Bridge and, after 1842, his beloved Sophia. It seems his tendency toward solitude sometimes filled him with guilt or, at least, grave doubts as to its rightness so he fluctuated between secrecy and self-revelation, between a literary concentration on the virtues and suffering of the isolated man and the need for social responsibility and involvement.

Malcolm Cowley has summed up the doubleness which could apparently be found everywhere in Hawthorne's character and which helped lead him to a preoccupation with what was real and what apparent: "... he was proud and humble, cold and sensuous, sluggish and active, conservative and radical, realistic and romantic; he was a recluse who became involved in party politics and a visionary with a touch of cynicism and a hard sense of money values." And he knew it; he was at times desperately aware of the co-existing but conflicting qualities which could, so easily it seemed, reside in human nature. Thus Hawthorne was also quick to recognize the doubleness in his Puritan ancestors who haunted him. Their earnestness, energy, strength, and
ambition resided in his memory in juxtaposition with their cruelty, sternness, and intolerance. He had ancestors that went back to the first Puritan settlers and the Salem witch trials of the seventeenth century. These were roots that therefore involved him in Americans’ first attempts to assimilate an imported religio-ethno-centric view into the other realities of American existence and he was painfully aware of its failures as well as its successes.

Bernard Malamud most likely has no such deep roots in American soil. The Jew was a comparative latecomer to this country and, as Leslie Fiedler says, when he began "to arrive in significant numbers toward the end of the nineteenth century, he and America were already set in their respective ways." The guilt, repressions, and ambiguities were already well formed in the American experience. The encounter with the Jew, as opposed to the encounter with the Puritan, may be "irrelevant to America's self consciousness" (Fiedler, 232), but the encounter with America was not irrelevant to the Jew. The Jew did come with a well-defined history; he was acquainted with the problem of having to protect and often rediscover his identity in the midst of exile and persecution — the shtetl and the pogrom. And in many respects the Jew prospered here, at least better than elsewhere in the world. In the long run, however, the Jew was segregated mentally, and emotionally and, at times, physically. He had a much harder time than any other white ethnic group in trying to assimilate himself into American culture and American society.

In the process of trying to belong, the Jew was bound to also absorb into his character some of the American experience. The promise
of opportunity and success was felt by him as by all immigrants, but he often found himself in a pseudo-ghetto situation which inhibited his talents, possibilities, and motivation. He was also affected, though indirectly, by that prime symbol of American guilt and alienation, the Negro. Fiedler explains it from the personal experience of having his mother point out, much to his surprise, the house in the now-Negro ghetto where she was born:

... I saw the comedy and pathos of our plight, how we looked to the goyish eye at the very moment we were looking at the Negro: the first symptom of a disease ... which eventually reduces newly seeded lawns and newly painted houses to baked gray mud and scabby boards. I could feel the Jew's special rancor at the Negro for permitting himself visibly to become ... the image, the proof of the alien squalor that the white, Gentile imagination finds also in the Jew. ... For the Jew, the Negro is his shadow, his improbable caricature, who he hates only at the price of hating himself; and he learns quickly (unless he allows rage to blind him) that for this reason his own human dignity depends not only theoretically but in terrible actuality upon that of the Negro.

(249-250)

With the passing of time, the Jew, for the most part, effected an end to social alienation. But his success in this respect left him a victim of the complex doubleness so accentuated in the American human spirit. In establishing his connections with this society he lost connection with his real self and had to seek in a new kind of exile, redefined by America and modern life, to find himself. The literary result was, in Sidney Richman's words, an end to the "literature of adaptation which was a willful counterfeiting of [the Jew's] identity." Instead, the Jewish writer -- Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth, to name a few -- moved into the main lines of American fictional
development and tradition in their portrayal of the "struggle to establish unity with some unacknowledged center of one's personality" (Richman, 22).

Thus the two authors with whom we are here concerned have a personal background of deep involvement with the dualities in American experience. The myth of the Puritan may be an American product and the myth of the Jew largely a European product, but their effects on the American writer are similar: an increased sensitivity to the problem of the ego, the identity of the soul, and the relationship of the individual to society. It is not important whether or not Hawthorne's characters are Puritans or Malamud's are Jews; but the human acknowledgement they bring to their characters is without doubt influenced by their respective backgrounds and in Hawthorne's case, by a personality that was especially attuned to the puzzling spirituality in man. Both men recognized the American awareness which consisted of the soul's tendency to peer into the mirrors of historical past, present experience, and the image of itself in others' eyes in order to ascertain its own identity.
Hawthorne and Malamud fit into the mainstream of American fiction in yet another way — a way which should be noted here as an appropriate final introduction to the discussion of their use of mirror imagery. The American romance is a genre about which Richard Chase has written an excellent book entitled The American Novel and Its Tradition. If there are individual points within it that can be disputed, its thesis and general explanation seem incisive and correct. The romance or romantic elements as defined by Chase are integral to the writings of many of our best authors, especially those who have a "rich passion for extremes" (Chase, 27). And extreme ranges of experience and contradictions are typical of the American culture; or, to put it another way, being denied a stable, well-defined culture with roots deep enough to assure social material or to provide accepted resolution of conflicts, the American writer has often turned to the disunities of American internal life and also the universal problems of all life. Since such elements or experience exist most often in the mind, portrayal of the daily "realities" of life will not suffice for material and the writer must turn to the psychological — which is often the abstract, the symbolic, the dramatic. In the romance characters need not be three-dimensional and their involvement with each other is often narrow or obsessive. The romance often rejects objectivity and tradition in favor of subjectivity and the exploration of new views or solutions of problems. It concentrates, in Henry James’s words, not so much on "the things we cannot possibly not know, sooner or later" but on "the things that, with all the faculties in the world, all the wealth and
all the courage and all the wit and all the adventure, we never can
directly know: the things that can reach us only through the beautiful
circuit and subterfuge of our thoughts and our desires" (Chase, 27).
Sidney Richman was speaking of much the same thing when he spoke of
Malamud's writing as capturing "the poetry of human relations at the point
where imagination and reality meet" (Richman, 143).

Hawthorne was one of the first to claim the word "romance" for his
own and ever since, regardless of the particularities it might assume in
the hands of an individual writer, it has come to signify "the peculiar
narrow profundity and rich interplay of lights and darks which one
associates with the best American writing. It has also signified, to be
sure, that common trait shared by the American romances as well as the
romances of other countries . . . -- namely, the penchant for the mar-
velous, the sensational, the legendary, and in general the heightened
effect" (Chase, 20). This quote about Hawthorne has easily observable
ties with another quote made by Alfred Kazin about Malamud and The
Assistant: "Malamud is naturally a fantasist of the ordinary, the common-
place, the average. . . . he has a natural sense for the humdrum transposed
to the extreme, of the symbolic and the highly colored. He tends to the
bizarre, the contorted, the verge of things that makes you shiver, not
laugh."12

To investigate in full the "romantic" qualities in the works of
Hawthorne and Malamud or the differing application of these qualities in
degree and kind would be a full length project in itself and not appro-
priate here. There is much skillfully done moral melodrama, some of which
is indicated in the descriptions to follow. In all four novels the range
of experience covered is relatively narrow and the characters few. There 
are in each of the four novels only four or five characters interacting: 
Hester, Dimmesdale, Chillingworth, and Pearl (*The Scarlet Letter*); 
Hepzibah, Clifford, Phoebe, Holgrave, and Judge Pyncheon (*The House of the 
Seven Gables*); Roy Hobbs, Sam, Walter Whambold, Harriet Bird, and, later, 
Roy, Pop Fisher, Bump Bailey, Memo Paris, and Iris Lemon (*The Natural*); 
Frank Alpine, Morris Rober, and Ida and Helen Bober. (*The Assistant*). Only 
in *The Assistant* do the characters come alive and is there an attempt to 
portray a real, growing emotional relationship. In the others the emotions 
are abstracted, almost symbolic. The settings, or sometimes, as in the 
case of *The Natural*, the lack of setting is likewise symbolic: the American 
wilderness and the enclosed town and the Puritan scaffold of *The Scarlet 
Letter*, the old house of *The House of the Seven Gables* in some ways as 
much a prison as that from which Clifford has come and the history from 
which they have all come, the natural settings of *The Natural* which are 
either dream-like or surrealistic and the ballpark and the unpicturable, 
gloomy tower rising above it (for the rest we ride the events more in 
homeless, rootless characters' minds, not their eyes), and, lastly, the 
neighborhood grocery store prison in *The Assistant* which has a relationship 
with Hawthorne's house, a gloomy bond with roots that can either reveal 
and change or destroy.

To add further symbolism to their settings — "to manage their 
atmospherical medium as to bring out or mellow the lights and deepen and 
enrich the shadow of the picture,"*1* the romance writer has often made 
full and dramatic use of light-dark imagery. This is particularly true 
Of Hawthorne and Malamud. It is so true, so pervasive in the novels, that
it is impossible to document the contention adequately except by actually reading the novels. One example: the eerie light of the central scaffold scene and the shifting light in the forest scene of *The Scarlet Letter* are kindred of the light-dark imagery in the last scenes of *The Natural*, an elaborate rendering of "Casey at the Bat." It is the seventh inning in the pennant play-off.

As he approached the plate, the sun, that had been plumbing the clouds since the game began, at last broke through and bathed the stadium in a golden glow that caused the crowd to murmur. As the warmth fell upon him, Roy felt a sob break in his throat. The weakness left his legs, his heart beat steadily...

After purposely wasting the first two pitches on fouls aimed at enemies in the stands and injuring Iris Lemon, pregnant with his child and with love for him, he again steps to the plate -- amid thunder and lightning that does not signal rain. He strikes out. In the ninth inning as Roy's turn to bat approaches, the sun "fell back in the sky..." The blank-faced crowd was almost hidden by the darkness crouching in the stands. Home plate lay under a deepening dusty shadow but Roy saw things with more light than he ever had before." But amid "brooding darkness" with fire in his eyes, Roy strikes out -- "with a roar. Bump Bailey's form glowed red on the wall. There was wail in the wind" (231-233). The technique is familiar enough now that Malamud feels no need to include equivocal explanations concerning the "magnifying and distorting medium of the imagination" or the "disease in...eye and heart" which often accompanied Hawthorne's dramatic and symbolic emblems.

While the notion of what was important in reality -- the inner workings of a man's spirit in conflict with itself -- and of the function
of fantasy — to symbolize or dramatize this reality — seems highly similar in the two authors, the practical application of the combination sometimes shows marked differences. Hawthorne's romances give us a "static and pictorial version of reality" largely because character struggle stays trapped within character description and as such the romances capture "little of life's drama, its emergent energy and warmth, its conflict, crisis and catharsis" (Chase, 71). The agony of Malamud's questing characters is palpable; he often drops the attempt at fantasy or fantastical description in favor of character introspection portrayed in a third person, narrated type of stream-of-consciousness which definitely shows the Joycean influence. The connection of character to setting is handled differently. In Hawthorne's novels, especially The Scarlet Letter, the characters seem to have little or no sense of the setting which tends to remain "a handsomely tapestried backdrop" (Chase, 23). In Malamud's novels the characters are more often painfully aware of the bleakness or, occasionally, the beauty of their surroundings. Also, during parts of The Assistant the light-dark imagery, perhaps reflecting the deeper despair of the twentieth century, becomes more reminiscent of that of a Dostoevskian "underground man" than of that surrounding Hawthorne's characters.

Hawthorne's explanation in The Scarlet Letter of the purpose of the techniques of the romance writer — such as, few characters, narrow or abstracted relationships, symbolic and dramatic settings, less concentration on realistic detail and more on legendary, allegorical or astonishing events — is still relevant. One may wish to avoid his emphasis on creating a "somewhere between the real world and a fairy-land" or spiritualizing objects till they lose their substance (34) when expressing the goal of a
modern writer like Malamud. But the creation of a "neutral territory" (34) is diction that can apply suitably to both men. Territory too grounded in the actual is incapable of expressing the psyche which is the center of action, and territory too grounded in the imaginary will lose contact with the reality necessary to involve our senses or our sense of actual experience. The preceding discussions have in toto attempted to give the common reasons for the theme and that part of their style which is similar in the writing of these two men. The imagery which may be most directly related to the theme in consideration is, as already suggested, the reflected imagery of mirrors. The reality in a mirror is distinctly neutral territory; it is not the actual but is directly connected to and dependent on the actual. It can bear a burden of suggestion and drama that the actual scene could not.
Malcolm Cowley has remarked of Hawthorne, "No other writer in this country or abroad ever filled his stories with such a shimmering wealth of mirrors" (8). Several reasons for this have already been suggested. Hawthorne himself explained his mirrors more than once. One revealing passage from his notebooks concerns a sight on an excursion on the Concord:

"I have never had such an opportunity to observe how much more beautiful reflection is than what we call reality. The sky, and the clustering foliage . . . the effect of sunlight . . . all these seemed unsurpassably beautiful, when beheld in upper air. But, on gazing downward, there they were, the same even to the minutest particular, yet arrayed in ideal beauty, which satisfied the spirit incomparably more than the actual scene. I am half convinced that the reflection is indeed the reality — the real thing which Nature imperfectly images to our grosser sense. At all events, the disembodied shadow is nearest to the soul."
(Matthiessen, 259)

The passage may suggest a lack of mature and artistic discrimination between the actual and the ideal, as the over-exuberance of his more fanciful nature sometimes did. But in practice Hawthorne usually knew well where and how to use the "actual" and the "ideal." As F.D. Matthiessen has pointed out in *American Renaissance*, "the 'ideal' that Hawthorne wanted to project in art was 'the real': not actuality transformed into an impossible perfection, but actuality disengaged from appearance" (264).

Hawthorne used the mirror as metaphor and symbol in several ways. Among other things it was a symbol for the memory and the artistic imagination. In the introductory chapter of *The Scarlet Letter* he
refers to the effect of the Custom House on his imagination: it "became a tarnished mirror" which "would not reflect, or only with miserable dimness, the figures with which I did my best to people it" (33). How the imaginative faculty should really function is summed up two pages later:

The 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. Glancing at the looking glass, we behold — deep within its haunted verge — the smouldering glow of the half-extinguished anthracite, the white moonbeams on the floor, and a repetition of all the gleam and shadow of the picture with one removed further from the actual, and nearer to the imaginative. Then, at such an hour and with this scene before him, if a man, setting all alone, cannot dream strange things, and make them look like truth, he need never try to write romances.

In these two quotes Hawthorne is not so much using the mirror as imagery in his narrative but using his narrative to develop his philosophy of the mirror. This poetic theorizing seems to have its effect on the first use of the image in the actual narrative of the scarlet letter. Hester, spending her day of punishment on the scaffold, sees in "the dusky mirror" of her mind (the mirror is also an actual mirror of her girlhood) her past with parents and husband while the present glimmers "indistinctly ... like a mass of imperfectly shaped and spectral images" (54-55). In The House of Seven Gables, Clifford meditates on his miserable past in prison and on the contradiction of a benevolent Providence by looking into "the mirror of his deeper consciousness" (168).

It is also in The House of the Seven Gables that this imaginative device is extended slightly to use as a symbol of the universal memory
or imagination. In Maule's well "the play and light agitation of the water, in its upward gush, wrought magically with these variegated pebbles, and made a continually shifting apparition of quaint figures, vanishing too suddenly to be definable" (98). When Phoebe gazes into the fountain she sees only colored pebbles; Clifford, on the other hand, sees faces—lovely in the image of his character or dreadful in the image of his past fate (173). The last mirror image in the book is again of Maule's well—"throwing up a succession of kaleidoscope pictures" which prophesy the bright future of the book's characters (364). The very first mirror image in the book had been of this same nature. The author makes a distinct point of describing the "large, dim looking-glass" which hung in the old parlor and which "was fabled to contain within its depths all the shapes that had ever been reflected there" (18). Later in the book the inner regions of this mirror do come alive with dead Pyncheons and Matthew Maule in a description which also reveals the major use, a further extension of the one just described above, to which Hawthorne put his reflected imagery.

As the dead figure of Judge Pyncheon presides in the old parlor, Hawthorne sports with a scene of old ancestors haunting the framed picture of the old Colonel on the wall at midnight. With characteristic equivocation he then asks to be excused:

The fantastic scene just hinted at must by no means be considered as forming an actual portion of our story. We were betrayed into this brief extravagance by the quiver of moonbeams; they dance hand-in-hand with shadows, and are reflected in the looking glass, which, you are aware, is always a kind of window or doorway into the spiritual world. (319)
But any close reader of Hawthorne knows, as any close friend would have known, that the reflected image was a serious and purposeful technique and that the above quote was an apt explanation of the purpose of the technique. The mirrored image can symbolically represent that other self — the inner self, the self separated from the physical body. It is this use that most intrigued Hawthorne who, more than most men, lived in two worlds, the ideal and the real, the immaterial and the material. In his own life he constantly sought to discover what he was really like as opposed to what he seemed to be like, to fight his inborn tendency to live in a spiritualized world ignoring the physical, temporal one, and to understand the similar contradictions in New England's history. His writing reflected his constant efforts to bridge the two worlds. There is a delightfully done scene in The Scarlet Letter which can be seen to symbolically reflect its authors constant urge to retire into his own spiritual being — or the ideal — and there root his existence, only to rediscover that spiritual being separated from physical reality does not equal reality — at least on this earth:

Here and there she came to a full stop and peeped curiously into a pool, left by the retiring tide as a mirror for Pearl to see her face in. Forth peeped at her, out of the pool, with dark, glistening curls around her head, and an elf-smile in her eyes, the image of a little maid, whom Pearl, having no other playmate, invited to take her hand, and run a race with her. But the visionary little maid, on her part, beckoned likewise, as if to say, — "This is a better place! Come thou into the pool!"

At first, as already told, she had flirted with her own image in a pool of water, beckoning the phantom forth, and — as it declined to venture — seeking a passage for herself into its sphere of impalpable earth and unattainable sky. Soon finding, however, that either she or the image was unreal, she turned elsewhere for better pastime.
Of the approximately thirty images of reflection plus numerous mirror analogues in *The Scarlet Letter* and *The House of the Seven Gables*, most center around the significance of the reflected appearance and its connection to reality. The "mirrors" usually symbolize a character's desire, need, or ability to perceive actuality disengaged from appearance and thus obtain essential insight into his own being and situation.

It may be stretching a point to say that Pearl, as described above, mirrors Hawthorne's particularly ambiguous nature: but that her function is to act as a dramatic mirror for Hester or, perhaps, society's condemnation seems indisputable. She may not be a character at all but an artistic device, a flesh and blood mirror. Most descriptions of the child contribute to this impression by concentrating either on the reflections in her personality or her own reflection in water. One example has been cited above. A more striking example is the lengthy description of her in the forest meeting which dwells on the mirrored image of her "fantastic beauty" in the brook, "the boundary between two worlds." The description centers around two sentences:

> Just where she had paused, the brook chanced to form a pool, so smooth and quiet that it reflected a perfect image of her little figure, with all the brilliant picturesqueness of her beauty, in its adornment of flowers and wreathed foliage, but more refined and spiritualized than the reality. This image, so nearly identical with the living Pearl, seemed to communicate somewhat of its own shadowy and intangible quality to the child herself.

Hawthorne goes to some effort in his descriptions to make Pearl unreal, "preternatural," "elf-like," "a spirit," "a living hieroglyphic." In at least four descriptions she becomes Hester's spiritual mirror. Hester, naturally alienated by a spirit of independence and an inquisitive
intellect, has been further isolated by the community for the sin of adultery. It would seem there would be little question for her deciding that her actions have been holy and right because, for her, community life is a must and she will not be able to function within it unless she understands and, to some degree, accepts the justness of its charges and its ostracism. She "knew that her deed had been evil" (83) and yet feels more than ever that "the world's law was no law for her mind" (155). The conflict is obvious and unsolvable and very American in its emphasis on both social responsibility and the preeminence of the individual. It drives her to daily awareness of the signs in those about her that might clarify the nature of her predicament. She sees part of her own nature reflected in Pearl: "It appalled her... to discern here, again, a shadowy reflection of the evil that had existed in herself. All this enmity and passion had Pearl inherited, by inalienable right, out of Hester's heart. Mother and daughter stood together in the same circle of seclusion from human society" (88). Also reflected in the child's eyes is the fear, and possibly bitterness, that she, Hester, has been the victim of someone — whether it is Dimmesdale or Chillingworth, Hawthorne does not say:

Once, this freakish, elfish cast came into the child's eyes, while Hester was looking at her own image in them, as mothers are fond of doing; and suddenly, — for women in solitude, and with troubled hearts, are pestered with unaccountable delusions, — she fancied that she beheld, not her own miniature portrait, but another face, in the small black mirror of Pearl's eyes. It was a face, fiend-like, full of smiling malice, yet bearing the semblance of features that she had known full well, though seldom with a smile, and never with malice in them... Many a time afterwards had Hester been tortured, though less vividly, by the same illusion. (91)

Such mirrors can be both revealing and obstructive; the conflict
within Hester seems to prevent her from seeing through the mirror and into the real individuality of a real child — or into herself. Critics have accused Hawthorne of creating in Pearl one of the most static and unbelievable characters in fiction; on the other hand, perhaps it is as much Hester (and society) as Hawthorne who creates the child as such. Hawthorne may be letting his major character, lost in an attempt to understand herself and yet adjust to the demands of the American Puritan community, assume a tendency which seemed so marked in his own life: a tendency to believe that the imagination can create a reality as potent and actual as one based on physical certainty. Thus both Hester and Pearl see each other in terms of that which most easily explains their isolation from society; their imaginations exaggerate features of appearance which are part of reality into, at times, a total reality:

"Mother," cried she, "I see you here. Look! Look!"

Hester looked, by way of humoring the child; and she saw that, owing to the peculiar effect of this convex mirror, the scarlet letter was represented in exaggerated and gigantic proportions, so as to be greatly the most prominent feature of her appearance. In truth, she seemed absolutely hidden behind it. Pearl pointed upward, also, at a similar picture in the headpiece, smiling at her mother, with the elfish intelligence that was so familiar an expression on her small physiognomy. That look of naughty merriment was likewise reflected in the mirror, with so much breath and intensity of effect, that it made Hester Prynne feel as if it could not be the image of her own child, but of an imp who was seeking to mould itself into Pearl's shape. (99-100)

Arthur Dimmesdale is tortured by his companionship in Hester's moment of intimate passion and by the added "sin" of secrecy which isolates him from his sinful fellow man. His conflict thus doubled by lack of release, he searches obsessively for understanding, relief, penance, and for the
way to unify his inner individuality with his social position as spiritual leader of the community. The Puritan habit of self-analysis to clarify one's position in God's eyes becomes a desire to clarify his situation to himself and thus drive himself to action:

He kept vigils . . . sometimes viewing his own face in a looking glass, by the most powerful light which he could throw upon it. He thus typified the constant introspection wherewith he tortured, but could not purify himself. In these lengthened vigils, his brain often reeled, and visions seemed to flit before him; perhaps seen doubtfully, and by a faint light of their own, in the remote dimness of the chamber, or more vividly, and close beside him, within the looking-glass. (137)

Roger Chillingworth, husband of Hester, has also been isolated — from wife, home, and society by his own secret identity and secret sin. His sin, cold and calculated, is different from Hester's and Dimmesdale's but still social in nature; he violates the sacredness and privacy of another man's soul in attempting to expose Dimmesdale's secret and torture him for the sin. This was Hawthorne's unpardonable sin and the only appropriate reflection for the author to place in the mirror will be that of "Satan" (131), the "arch-fiend" (148):

The unfortunate physician, while uttering these words, lifted his hands with a look of horror, as if he had beheld some frightful shape, which he could not recognize, usurping the place of his own image in the glass. It was one of those moments — which sometimes occur only at the interval of years — when a man's moral aspect is faithfully revealed to his mind's eye. (163)

All three characters just discussed above were victims not only of human nature but also of the tensions of the new society in America.
The mirror imagery in *The Scarlet Letter* does not portray a resolution of the search for a unified identity — though Hester and Dimmesdale do reach a partial peace, the first through resignation and social service and the latter through confession; it instead emphasizes that the attempt to understand individual human nature, realize its potential, and then reconcile it with social reality is never ending.

Mirrors and reflections are the most profuse in Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables*. Some are used, as noted before, as a symbol for the mind or memory or artistic imagination. It does not seem far-fetched to find in one example, not noted before, a double symbolism. The soap bubbles that Clifford blows symbolize the delicate, refined nature of his soul or mind which the more practical or hardened — Judge Pyncheon — might delight in destroying and also Hawthorne's particularized, sometimes over-worked view of his own profession: "Little impalpable worlds were those soap bubbles, with the big world depicted, in hues bright as imagination, on the nothing of their surface. It was curious to see how passers-by regarded these brilliant fantasies, as they came floating down and made the dull atmosphere imaginative about them. Some stopped to gaze . . . some looked angrily upward . . . " (193). Another way in which the mirror delighted Hawthorne is displayed in the description of the modern store with its plenitude of glass, fixtures, and merchandise and "with noble mirrors at the farther end of each establishment, doubling all this wealth by a brightly burnished vista of unrealities" (51). Or in
the narrative of Alice Pyncheon whose father only begins to realize the true consequences of his actions when he views the scene framed in a mirror: "Turning half around he caught a glimpse of Maule's figure in the looking glass. At some paces from Alice, with his arms uplifted in the air, the carpenter made a gesture as if directing downward a slow, ponderous and invisible weight upon the maiden. 'Stay, Maule!' exclaimed Mr. Pyncheon ..." (230). For the most part, however, the reflections again deal with the conflict of reality and appearance and a character's perception of both. The imagery often reflects the effect of past experience on a character and also the tendency of a mirror image to both reflect and accentuate a reality within the soul.

Clifford, Hepzibah, Phoebe, and Judge Pyncheon are descendents of the Puritan Colonel Pyncheon whose obsession with property has caused him to usurp Matthew Maule of a choice tract and eventually assist in causing Maule's death as a witch. The grand and dark house with the seven gables which the Colonel builds becomes the physical symbol of the inheritance of greed and oppression he will leave to his descendents. It also becomes, in the course of time, a symbol of the isolation that has fallen on its inhabitants because of the lack of courage and insight to deal with their identity and change their situation.

Clifford, having spent thirty years in prison after being convicted of the murder of his uncle on the false evidence of his cousin, Judge Pyncheon, returns to the old house near the beginning of the narrative.
His beautiful, sensitive, intelligent soul has been smothered by his long and unjust imprisonment and what remains is, for the most part, a ruined replica, a recluse from all society and its confusing, impersonal cruelty. This soul, this being, had once been caught in an exquisite Malbone miniature portrait. But his present appearance is indicative of his present reality. Phoebe, with the insight of the fresh and eager, sees reflected in the dressing gown, once worn in posing for the miniature, his now miserable condition:

This old, faded garment, with all its pristine brilliancy extinct, seemed in some indescribable way, to translate the wearer's untold misfortune, and make it perceptible to the beholder's eye. It was the better to be discerned by this exterior type, how worn and old were the soul's more immediate garments; that form and countenance, the beauty and grace of which had almost transcended the skill of the most exquisite of artists.

Later it becomes apparent that Clifford has also been aware of his fading youth and jaded possibilities. In the old house he is haunted by the image of what he has become; his despair and loneliness are made verbal as he converses with the puzzled gentlemen on the train which is taking him and Hepzibah from the social isolation and spiritual decay represented by the house and its darkness and mirrors. In remarks to be echoed by Thoreau he disparages such roots as the "rusty, crazy, creaky, dry-rotted, dingy, dark, miserable old dungeon" (297) which is representative of the desire for "real-estate" for which most sins are committed (298). In conjunction with this theory and his view of the old house, he explains:

No longer ago than this morning, I was old. I remember looking in the glass, and wondering at my own gray hair, and the wrinkles, many and deep, right across my brow, and the furrows down my cheeks, and the prodigious trampling of crow's-feet about my temples. It was too soon... (297)
Clifford's companion, Hepzibah, has fared no better in the looking glass. She too sees in the "oval, dingy-framed toilet glass" in which Hawthorne pictures her inspecting herself before opening the shop a reflection not only of a present sourness and dismay which is real but also the miserable, misunderstood, isolated years spent in the old house clinging to the past:

Her scowl, -- as the world, or such part of it as sometimes caught a transitory glimpse of her at the window, wickedly persisted in calling it, -- her scowl had done Miss Hepzibah a very ill office, in establishing her character as an ill-tempered old maid; nor does it appear improbable that, by often gazing at herself in a dim looking-glass, and perpetually encountering her own frown within its ghostly sphere, she had been led to interpret the expression almost as unjustly as the world did. (34-35)

Unlike Hester, Hepzibah makes little direct effort to understand life and her place in it. Having done nothing wrong, she still feels the guilt of having done nothing right. The return of her brother from prison and the consequent necessary actions to provide for and protect him lead her not so much into self-analysis but a natural strengthening and broadening of character.

Judge Pyncheon is an isolated and guilty character who seemingly feels neither the isolation nor the guilt. His major sins of slandering and causing the imprisonment of Clifford and seeking to wrest from Clifford's mind the secret of hidden Pyncheon wealth is compounded by his total lack of desire or ability to know himself. His physical resemblance to his ancestor, "the Puritan," is often mentioned and their spiritual relationship is emphasized in descriptions of similarity of character: "cold, imperious, relentless, crafty, laying his purposes
deep and following them out with an inveteracy of pursuit that knew
neither rest nor conscience; trampling on the weak, and when essential
to his ends, doing his utmost to beat down the strong" (138-139). The
"red fire" (145) sometimes kindled in his eyes is treated like the
hellish blue fire in Chillingworth's eyes (122). His inability to
distinguish between appearance and reality is directly emphasized by
mirror imagery:

This proper face was what he beheld in the looking-glass.
... A hard, cold man, thus unfortunately situated, seldom
or never looking inward, and resolutely taking his idea
of himself from what purports to be his image as reflected
in the mirror of public opinion, can scarcely arrive at
true self-knowledge, except through loss of property and
reputation. (262-263)

This man who was content to ignore his obligations to his fellow man
dies alone and is missed or mourned by none.

In various other ways and places throughout these two novels and his
other works, Hawthorne used the mirror image as a symbolic bridge
between the isolation and frustration of the individual and his aspired-
to or needed sense of self-knowledge and human communion. One hundred
years later we would expect to find differences in the handling of this
device, as indeed there are. The main similarity, however, is basic--
as expressed briefly by Theodore Solotaroff, one of the few critics to
comment on the relationship between Hawthorne and Malamud:

As in the romances of another moralist, Nathaniel Hawthorne,
there are a good many mirror and light images in Malamud's
tales, and they signify much the same preoccupation with
those moments when the distinction between the objective
and the imaginary is suspended and the spirit sees either
itself or, in Hawthorne's term, its "emblems." 17

While Hawthorne, so interested in the dark depths of the human soul,
made many of his mirrors dim or dusky. Malamud's mirrors are often cracked, perhaps signifying the author's understanding of modern man's schizophrenic nature. Malamud was not preoccupied with the reflected image like Hawthorne, and we find much less mirror imagery in his writing -- approximately seventeen mirror images plus character mirror analogues in the first two novels. We might justifiably suppose this to be the natural result of a difference in personality though little yet seems to be known about Malamud beyond the skeleton biographical facts of a basically happy Jewish upbringing in Brooklyn, education including an M.A. in English, and a devotion to imaginative, honest writing concerning man's positive potential. With a hundred years of various types of literary realism and naturalism intervening between Malamud and Hawthorne, we can also expect the mirror imagery to occur more naturally and unobtrusively and never to be accompanied by explanations of the use of the image such as we find in Hawthorne. Self-confrontation is the major theme in Malamud's novels, and people also become mirrors reflecting essential characteristics of others in the novel.

The Natural is about Roy Hobbs, an orphan and a natural wonder at baseball whose first chance in the big leagues is stopped short by a silver bullet and whose second chance, at the age of thirty-four, is complicated by a misplaced love for Memo Paris, health problems, and, especially, a lack of ability to see the truth about himself and others and deal with his emotional problems. The book begins with mirror imagery:

Roy Hobbs pawed at the glass before thinking to prick a match with his thumbnail and hold the spurring flame in his cupped palm close to the lower berth window, but by then he had figured it was a tunnel they were passing.
through and was no longer surprised at the bright sight of himself holding a yellow light over his head, peering back in.

This opening kneeling reflection appropriately emphasizes the theme of self-confrontation and need for self-knowledge and also suggests the obscurity and difficulty of Roy's quest: learning to know and deal with one's self means wandering in darkness much of the time.

This image sets the stage for a series of illuminations which reflect Roy, past and future, and from which he seems to learn nothing. It resolves into other characters. Walter the Whammer Whambold, whom Roy defeats in a pitch-out contest early in the book, reflects the glory-hungry but destroyed baseball player Roy himself will become. Bump Bailey, an incorrigible prankster and self-centered player, reflects the blindness to values and inability to love which will eventually cause Roy to face defeat in the Malamudian sense -- as a human being who fails to utilize the goodness and ability within him. When Roy first hears Bump's voice in the Knights locker room he thinks it is the Whammer's voice echoing through fifteen years, and after Bump's death, which Roy indirectly helps cause, he becomes identified by the fans with Bump. He is not, however, identified with Bump by Memo Paris, Bump's fiancée whom Bump had tricked into sleeping with Roy and with whom Roy has fallen in love. Memo, regardless of occasional pretense to the contrary, will never see Roy as a person but only as Bump's killer and only as she first saw him, his appearance reflected in a mirror as he gazes through her open hotel door at her half-clothed form:

She was combing her hair before a mirror on the wall as
the light streamed in around her through the billowy curtain. When she saw him in the mirror she let out a scream. He stepped back as if he had been kicked in the face. Then the door slammed and he had a headache.

If Roy could see his reflection in these people and the reflection which Memo has substituted for his real self and summon strength to deal with the reflections, he might succeed in baseball and in love. But he sees only his past and that he can't deal with:

Bracing himself to fight without strength, he snapped on the light. A white shadow flew into the bathroom. Rushing in, he kicked the door open. An ancient hoary face stared at him. "Bump!" He groaned and shuddered. An age passed... His own face gazed back at him from the bathroom mirror, his past, his youth, the fleeting years.

Haunted by trains, telephones, silver bullets, and Bump, Roy only continues to struggle and fail. Nor does he make good the chance to absolve his past failing of Sam, his trainer, when confronted years later with a like father-figure, Pop Fisher, manager of the New York Knights. Nor is he able to recognize in Memo the same destructive forces as those in Harriet Bird of the silver bullet, to whose fatal attractions he has always felt guilty about succumbing.

Roy agrees to help throw the pennant game to obtain the money to marry Memo; when he changes his mind, it is too late and circumstances, temper, and a budding young pitcher, an echo of himself fifteen years ago, combine to force him to the final defeat. As he later confronts and punishes the Judge, the crooked owner of the team who had bought him off, Memo fires a gun at him. "The bullet grazed his shoulder and broke the Judge's bathroom mirror. The glass clattered to the floor" (236).
The shattering glass symbolizes the failure on the part of Roy, perhaps all four characters in the room, to come to grips with their real selves and to realize their true potential for good, greatness, and peace.

While The Natural ends in defeat for its main character, it does not deny the possibility of future victory. Roy is at least able to recognize, "I never did learn anything out of my past life, now I have to suffer again" (236). In The Assistant, however, the end brings partial victory, a victory over warring elements within the main character and over past mistakes -- which results in the small peace self-knowledge and realization of potential can bring. It does this regardless of being a novel saturated to the end with pain, poverty, spiritual deprivation, and ironic contradiction. Frank Alpine, about whose orphan past we learn little and that little suggesting loneliness, shiftlessness, and a basically good soul, is introduced in a hold-up scene robbing the Jewish grocer, Morris Bober. "A cracked mirror hung behind him on the wall and every so often he turned to stare into it." Minutes later the reluctant thief sees in the mirror his reluctant comrade, Ward Minogue, clout the Jew unconscious. The view in the mirror displays not just an isolated incident but the two characters who represent the potential halves of Frank Alpine's ego; it also, of course, frames the incident and freezes it into an image with a more permanent dramatic impression -- a technique Hawthorne well understood. Frank had gone into this particular venture with Ward because of a revelation had at the depth of despair, a "terrific idea . . . that he was meant for crime" (92). Days after the robbery Frank returns to the
small imprisoning grocery store and becomes, despite persistent objections, an assistant to the wounded Morris Bober, who is himself a symbol of the isolation and frustration brought on by race, lack of opportunity, lack of initiative, and the unfulfilled promises of America.

While Frank, his past unknown to the grocer, continues to steal from Morris both his money and his daughter, Helen, he is also being exposed to the perpetually suffering Jew's philosophy that "this to be a Jew means to do what is right, to be honest, to be good. This means to other people. Our life is hard enough. Why should we hurt somebody else. For everybody should be the best, not only you and me" (124). He is also impressed with Helen's philosophy of self-discipline. The struggle that ensues within Frank is the novel and is reflected in the mirror:

Sometimes he went around with a quiet grief in him, as if he had just buried a friend and was carrying the fresh grave within himself. This was an old feeling of his. . . . On days when he felt this way he sometimes got headaches and went around muttering to himself. He was afraid to look into the mirror for fear it would split apart and drop into the sink. (86)

Helen in analyzing Frank, with whom she is falling in love, puzzles:

At the very minute he was revealing himself, saying who he was, he made you wonder if it was true. You looked into mirrors and saw mirrors and didn't know what was right or real or important. (121)

Through a confusion of events and growing acceptance of suffering, Frank slowly becomes Morris, not the shiftless wanderer he had apparently been or the criminal he had once set out to be. The process is one of setbacks and constant, usually bitter, introspection and self-reproach for his hidden crimes. After being caught at his petty embezzling
just as he was quitting and half-rapeing Helen just as she was about to offer her love to him, the agony becomes especially bitter:

Then when he saw his face in the mirror he felt a nose-thumbing revulsion. Where have you ever been asked the one in the glass, except on the inside of a circle? What have you ever done but always the wrong thing? The self he had secretly considered valuable was, for all he could make of it, a dead rat.

He thought always of Helen. How could she know what was going on in him? If she ever looked at him again she would see the same guy on the outside. He could see out but nobody could see in.

There is, of course, the suggestion of the one-way mirror in the latter example; circumstance and his own actions have clouded the possibility of anybody seeing his real self. In the first example there is an echo of a statement made by Richard Chase about characters in Faulkner's As I Lay Dying, a statement which would apply easily to Hawthorne's major characters as well as those of other American writers: the search for identity and the rediscovery of the self can only be accomplished by breaking out of the circle of selfhood and discovering one's common humanity.

When Morris dies, Frank returns to the store and takes a night job to help support it. The unforgiving Helen sees him one night behind the counter:

He gazed with burning eyes in a bony face, with sad regret, at his reflection in the window, then went drunkenly back to sleep.

Herein is the suggestion of pathetic recognition of the complexity of his mixed nature and resignation at the dreariness of living one's best. In the end Frank remains imprisoned in the store accepting the challenge of making the business work and helping care for Ida and Helen with no
promise of love in return. The dreariness is lightened only by the fact the suffering image Frank now sees reflected in windows and in the cracked mirror is that of the whole man he could become and wanted to become; he has obtained the freedom to see and do the right thing and can face himself and his past with calm introspection:

Frank washed his face before the cracked mirror. His thick hair needed cutting but it could wait one more week. He thought of growing himself a beard but was afraid it would scare some of the customers away, so he settled for a mustache. He had been letting one grow for two weeks and was surprised at the amount of red in it. He sometimes wondered if his old lady had been a redhead. (244)

The endings in Malamud's novels are less cheerful, less optimistic than those in Hawthorne's novels. This is partially because the success of Malamud's characters is determined only by the clearness of their vision and the strength of their will; circumstances usually work against the fate and peace of the hero while Hawthorne manages circumstances, especially final circumstances, more to favor his characters. Throughout most of the novels, however, there exists a similar tone of desperation yet hope, imprisonment while on a quest. This is created by such things as the symbolically arranged settings, the light-dark imagery, and the mirrors. And this tone, created by technique, in turn creates the theme.

There are subtle differences in Hawthorne's and Malamud's view of this theme which can be perceived in the mirror imagery itself. The concentration on "tarnished," "Jusky," "Dim," "Siny," and "black" reflections in Hawthorne do seem to suggest a nineteenth century emphasis on doubts as to what the real nature of man was while the "cracked," "fragmented, diverse mirrors in Malamud also seem to add to the identity problem the
twentieth century crisis of dealing with more diverse personal relationships, a more developed philosophy of individual freedom, and a feeling of world kinship while trying to discover oneself. In the final analysis, however, the mirrors help create a common theme that emphasizes Hawthorne's and Malamud's deep understanding of the unavoidable dualities in the human predicament: the ambiguous nature of good and evil; the power of love and yet the tendency to self-centeredness; the potential of man to rise above himself and his circumstances and yet the confused, obscured vision often accompanying this journey; and the need for responsibility to and communion with one's fellow man in the process of trying to establish one's individual identity.
NOTES

1 Dean Cadle, "Bernard Malamud," Wilson Library Bulletin, XXXIII (December 1958), 226. In this short biographical sketch, seemingly one of few available on Malamud, Cadle quotes Harvey Swados as saying: "... from now on anyone who pretends to speak seriously, either here or abroad, of the American literary scene, will have to come to grips with his version of the inner reality of American life." Many critics have spoken similarly of Hawthorne's aim and achievement in writing, such as Richard Chase in this comment: "In his writings romance was made for the first time to respond to the particular demands of an American imagination and to mirror, in certain limited ways, the American mind" (The American Novel and Its Tradition, 19).

2 Robert Spiller, The Cycle of American Literature: An Essay in Historical Criticism (New York: The New American Library, 1956), ix. Future documentation will occur within the text; similar procedure will be followed, in most cases, for all other authors to be cited once in the notes; if more than one work for an author is cited in the notes, the text will make clear which reference is intended.


6 F.O. Matthiessen, American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941), 283. The phrase is originally from a quote made by Cotton Mather: "... the New Englanders are a people of God settled in those which were once the devil's territories."


12 Alfred Kazin, "Fantasist of the Ordinary," Commentary, XXIV (July 1957), 90.


16 In connection with this point, deep analysis of the art as well as the story of this novel does seem to reveal, to a remarkable degree, the mind of its author. Richard Chase has put it: "It is at every point the mirror of Hawthorne's mind, and the only one of his longer fictions in which we are not disturbed by the shortcomings of this mind but are content to marvel at its profound beauty" (The American Novel and Its Tradition, 70).


18 From the Wilson Library Bulletin biographical sketch as cited above. One other biographical source, unavailable to me, is: Joseph Wershba, "No Horror but 'Sadness!,'" New York Post, September 14, 1958, p. M2.


20 C. W. B. Lewis in The American Adam. Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955) devotes most of his energies to an intellectual history of the nineteenth century which attempts to investigate the debate between novelists, essayists, historians, etc., attempting to define the American character. The end result of their efforts was a juxtaposition of "what might be against knowledge of what is" (10) in American nature and human nature. Hawthorne's work is used as a particularly good example of the novelist's skeptical view of man either bound by tradition or freed by rebirth in a new land.
Primary Sources:


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