

Due to its emphasis on the concepts of self-reliance, inner guidance and the aboriginal Self, Ralph Waldo Emerson's philosophy elaborates theses that favor the individual over community, such as the superiority and sanctity of self-definition, as opposed to definitions constructed by society and imposed on the individual. It is possible, then, to perceive his philosophy as important for the formation of the Women's Rights Movement and for the emerging feminism. In his four romances, Nathaniel Hawthorne creates female protagonists who advocate for women's right to self-reliance as Emerson describes it. Hawthorne's heroines can be understood and interpreted as contemplating the Emersonian principles, thus illustrating the connection between Emerson's philosophy, and themes and motifs present in Hawthorne's romances. Related to Hawthorne's portrayal of the heroines' reflections on the concepts of inner guidance, the aboriginal Self, moral dereliction and self-reliance is Hawthorne's attitude toward the relationship between "womanhood" and "femininity" on one side, and "manhood" and "masculinity" on the other side. The ambivalence of woman, as depicted by Hawthorne, consists in the discrepancy between attributes traditionally associated with "femininity", such as devotion, affection and humility, and the will to self-reliance, selfassertion and independence.