Romantic Elements in *The Scarlet Letter*

* The novel is written in the third person omniscient, which means an unnamed narrator tells the story of all of the characters. The narrator tells the story as if he is retelling an old legend. Symbolism and myth were given great prominence during the Romantic era. The letter A symbolizes many different things in The Scarlet Letter. The most obvious representation is adultery. Besides adultery the A represents how Hester has become 'able' in how she is very helpful and kind to the "less fortunate." It also represents 'angel', which is what Hester has become. From the time she is forced to wear the scarlet letter she begins to live a mostly sinless life. Pearl is the living scarlet letter and symbolizes the sin that changed her life.
* This is a novel of emotion and passion. The Puritans were stern and bottled up their emotions, and it is for this reason that emotion begins to erupt. Hester and Reverend Dimmesdale act on their passions and commit adultery. Hester deals with an internal emotional struggle; Hawthorne shows her determination to live in this society directly through her actions and relations to others, and indirectly through the presentation of herself and her child.
* The novel contains a supernatural element. Pearl’s eerie intelligence and “elfish” ways. Hester sees Pearl as a mythical creature or as demon. Mistress Hibbins (Governor Bellingham’s sister) is believed by many to be a witch. She often invites people to the forest to engage in witchcraft and Satanic rituals. Hawthorne uses her to depict the hypocrisy of the Puritans, and she serves as a reminder to Hester and Dimmesdale of their sin; each time she appears they suffer from remorse.
* Hawthorn exhibits a love for nature. The Romantics believed that society often stifled creativity and encouraged conformity. The rosebush outside of the prison represents receiving comfort from nature. This theme can also be seen when Hester and Pearl meet Dimmesdale in the forest.  In the peaceful solitude of nature, a person can hear the still, soft voice of the soul. There, she can turn inward to find her truest self. This is the authentic self the Romantics celebrate, one not battered into uniformity and compliance by civilization. The natural world enables Hester and Dimmesdale to rediscover themselves and their love. When they meet in the forest seven years after their affair, it is as though the condemnation of the town and its laws never existed.