The American Critical Archives is a series of reference books that provide representative selections of contemporary reviews of the main works of major American authors. Specifically, each volume contains both full reviews and excerpts from reviews that appeared in newspapers and weekly and monthly periodicals, generally within a few months of the publication of the work concerned. There is an introductory historical overview by a volume editor, as well as a selective bibliography for further reference.

This volume compiles the notices and reviews of Nathaniel Hawthorne's work covering the period from the publication of *Fanshawe* (1828) to the appearance of *Dr. Grimshawe's Secret* (1882). Reviews by such notables as Henry Fothergill Chorley, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Edgar Allan Poe, Herman Melville, Margaret Fuller, Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, Edwin Whipple, Henry James, William Dean Howells, and many others document the popular response to Hawthorne's tales, romances, notebooks, and fragmentary works and the efforts of his peers to capture and define the nature of Hawthorne's mind and the quality of his art. Also included are a critical introduction focusing on the thematic concerns of Hawthorne's reviews, a selection of retrospective reviews (some appearing as early as the 1840s), and a selective bibliography of other notices and reviews, which supplement the main critical writing in tracing Hawthorne's rise from relative obscurity to international literary stature.

AMERICAN CRITICAL ARCHIVES 4

Nathaniel Hawthorne: The Contemporary Reviews

The American Critical Archives

GENERAL EDITOR: M. Thomas Inge, Randolph-Macon College

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Nathaniel Hawthorne

The Contemporary Reviews

Edited by
John L. Idol, Jr.
Clemson University
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Dedicated to

ARLIN TURNER

who represented the finest tradition
of humanistic studies
at Duke University

Contents

Series Editor's Preface

The American Critical Archives series documents a part of a writer's career that is usually difficult to examine, that is, the immediate response to each work as it was made public on the part of reviewers in contemporary newspapers and journals. Although it would not be feasible to reprint every review, each volume in the series reprints a selection of reviews designed to provide the reader with a proportionate sense of the critical response, whether it was positive, negative, or mixed. Checklists of other known reviews are also included to complete the documentary record and allow access for those who wish to do further reading and research.

The editor of each volume has provided an introduction that surveys the career of the author in the context of the contemporary critical response. Ideally, the introduction will inform the reader in brief of what is to be learned by a reading of the full volume. The reader then can go as deeply as necessary in terms of the kind of information desired—be it about a single work, a period in the author's life, or the author's entire career. The intent is to provide quick and easy access to the material for students, scholars, librarians, and general readers.

When completed, the American Critical Archives should constitute a comprehensive history of critical practice in America, and in some cases England, as the writers' careers were in progress. The volumes open a window on the patterns and forces that have shaped the history of American writing and the reputations of the writers. These are primary documents in the literary and cultural life of the nation.

M. Thomas Inge

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Introduction

If he saw these words in the *Albany* [New York] *Argus* when they appeared after the publication of *The Snow-Image and other Twice-told Tales,* Nathaniel Hawthorne had to admit that he had long since ceased being the "obscurest man in American letters," as he had once styled himself: "The same condensation of thought, and power of expression, and irresistible wit, and almost matchless knowledge of human nature, that have given him so high a place among the most accomplished writers of the day, may be recognized on every page of the present volume" (29 December 1851). From the time the first edition of *Twice-told Tales* (1837) brought Hawthorne's name before American and British readers, reviewers tirelessly assessed the quality of his mind, discussed the features of his art, and tried to determine his standing vis-à-vis American and British (and sometimes French and German) writers. Far less often, they paused to consider his limitations as a man and artist or to assign rank to his tales, sketches, and romances. Owing largely to the prefaces in his collection of tales and sketches, the "Custom-House" essay in *The Scarlet Letter,* his campaign biography of Franklin Pierce, and his dedication of *Our Old Home* to Pierce, reviewers expressed strong interest in Hawthorne's life, opinions, and public service. As his notebooks began to offer more information about his personal and creative life, a number of reviewers turned to omnibus or retrospective essays to share their opinions and insights, continuing a practice that Evert A. Duyckinck, Herman Melville, and Henry T. Tuckerman, among others, had initiated. When his completed romances had all appeared, and even before all of them had been published, a few critics and reviewers ventured to rank them. The publication of his unfinished romances invited comparisons with completed tales and novels or led to laments that Hawthorne had been disserved by family and publishers; but they also evoked rounds of cheers, since they opened other windows on Hawthorne's mind and art or stood as superior works at a time when other American novelists were experiencing a dry season, at least in the view of the critics.

The characteristics of Hawthorne's mind called forth comments from the very beginning, and so frequently was it declared to be "morbid" and "gloomy" that his wife, Sophia, in an effort to erase those words from the reviewers' vocabulary, addressed the issue in her preface to *Passages from the English Note-Books of Nathaniel Hawthorne* (1870):

> It is very earnestly hoped that these volumes of notes . . . will dispel an often expressed opinion that Mr. Hawthorne was gloomy and morbid. He had the inevitable pensiveness and gravity of a person who possessed what a friend of his called "the awful power of insight"; but his mood was always cheerful and equal, and his mind peculiarly healthful, and the airy splendor of his wit and humor was the light of his home. He saw too far to be despondent, though his vivid sympathies and shaping imagination often made him sad in behalf of others. (p. vii)

From *Fanshawe* (1828) onward, reviewers sought just the right word to describe Hawthorne's mental outlook and personality as they perceived them through his work. The reviewer for the Boston *Daily Advertiser* found Hawthorne to be reserved and diffident, but catching the side of Hawthorne that Sophia claimed to be "the light of his home," William Leggett, writing for the *Critic* (22 November 1828), saw a "great deal of gayety and buoyancy of spirit" to contrast with Hawthorne's somberness. Samuel Goodrich, who published many of Hawthorne's tales and sketches in his popular annual, *The Token*, believed that Hawthorne's gloom helped to explain his lack of recognition (*Centenary Edition* [hereafter *CE*], IX, p. 17). Disagreeing with Goodrich, Park Benjamin, reviewing the now combined *The Token and Atlantic Souvenir* for the *American Monthly Magazine* (October 1836), suggested that modesty kept Hawthorne from claiming his place as a leading American writer. Breaking with Goodrich's practice of publishing Hawthorne's work anonymously, Benjamin identified Hawthorne as the author of many yearbook contributions.

Once Hawthorne was known, by name at least, his personal traits remained a subject both of keen interest and frequent speculation. The string of adjectives used by reviewers is long: "airy," "allegoric," "aristocratic," "candid," "cold," "conservative," "contemplative," "curious," "cynical," "dark," "delicate," "deep," "dreamy," "elusive," "emotional," "fatalistic," "feminine," "generous," "gentle," "gloomy," "grave," "humorous," "imaginative," "inquisitive," "insightful," "introspective," "ironic," "judicial," "learned," "masculine," "melancholy," "mirthful," "modest," "moody," "moral," "morbid," "mystical," "mythic," "observant," "passive," "peculiar," "philosophic," "poetic," "prying," "quaint," "remote," "reposeful," "reserved," "restful," "reticent," "retiring," "sad," "satiric," "self-sacrificing," "sensitive," "solemn," "somber," "tactful," "tender," "thoughtful," "unimpassioned," and "upright." The breadth and depth of Hawthorne's mind quickly drew attention and led reviewers to offer strings of nouns and adjectives as they responded to his fiction. Orestes A. Brownson's review of the 1842 edition of *Twice-told Tales* provides one of the fullest examples:

> His mind is creative; more so than that of any other American writer that has yet appeared, with the exception, perhaps, of Washington Irving. He

> has wit, humor, pathos, in abundance; an eye for all that is wild, beautiful, or picturesque in nature; a generous sympathy with all forms of life, thought, and feeling, and warm, deep, unfailing love of his race. He has withal a vigorous intellect, and a serene and healthy spirit. He is gentle, but robust and manly; full of tenderness, but never maudlin. (*Boston Quarterly Review,* April 1842)

Balanced as such a complex and rich mind as Brownson describes would seem to be, it nonetheless appeared to be too reserved, retiring, gloomy, and morbid for some critics, who considered Hawthorne too gentle and weak to muster the strength and majesty to match those of America's mountains, rivers, and prairies. One such critic, Charles Fenno Hoffman, saw him "as a stricken deer in the forest of life" (*American Monthly Magazine,* March 1838). So well did Hawthorne come to play the role of the retiring, observant, gentle, and somber author that it is possible, as John McWilliams shows in "The Politics of Isolation" (*The Nathaniel Hawthorne Review,* Spring 1989), to conclude that Hawthorne took full advantage of the terms being used to describe the quality of his mind. That he possibly played the role of the stricken deer too well could account for his wife's prominently placed effort to correct the view that readers and reviewers had come to hold of the man who chose to call his first-owned home "The Wayside."

If style is indeed the person, then it is virtually impossible to separate the quality of Hawthorne's mind from the features of his art. Reviewers early and late, as a matter of fact, kept compounding the two. His fellow townsman Caleb Foote announced the publication of the first edition of *Twice-told Tales* to other Salemites by observing that

> Mr. Hawthorne's quiet and cheerful humor brightens every view of human nature, while a tone of pensive feeling breathes out even from the lightest sports of his fancy. It is this combination which makes him so fascinating a writer, and which has been said to be an unfailing characteristic of true genius. A fine moral tone pervades all the creations of his fancy, which gives them a still stronger hold upon our regard. (*Salem Gazette,* 14 March 1837)

Responding to the dark elements in the same collection of tales and sketches, Park Benjamin wrote:

> Some rending and ever-remembered sorrow seems to hover about his thoughts, and color them with the shadow of their presence. Almost every story in the volume is filled with a pervading sadness. In these pages sunshine is a transient visitor; cloud and darkness and a softer gloom, perpetual guests.

> We think that the main peculiarity of Hawthorne, as a writer, and that which distinguishes him from any other with whom we are acquainted, is this same fine tone of sadness that pervades his best tales and sketches. (*American Monthly Magazine,* March 1838)

A review of *The Scarlet Letter* in the *Portland Transcript* (30 March 1850) took much the same tack: "The author's peculiar genius—his refined humor, his deep pathos, and his power of delineating character—are displayed in their highest excellence." The man who came to be Hawthorne's favorite reviewer, Edwin Percy Whipple, pulling in a few terms that had been established as appropriate ones to describe the quality of Hawthorne's art, wrote:

> With regard to *The Scarlet Letter,* the reader of Hawthorne might have expected an exquisitely written story, expansive in sentiment, and suggestive in characterization, but they will hardly be prepared for a novel of so much tragic interest and tragic power, so deep in thought and so condensed in style, as is here presented to them. It evinces equal genius in the region of great passions and elusive emotions, and bears on every page the evidence of a mind thoroughly alive, watching patiently the movements of morbid hearts when stirred by strange experiences, and piercing, by its imaginative power, directly through all the externals to the core of things. (*Graham's Magazine,* May 1850)

Hawthorne's condensed style appealed also to Henry Tuckerman, who linked it directly to the quality of Hawthorne's mind: "The style of Hawthorne is wholly inevasive; he resorts to no tricks of rhetoric or verbal ingenuity; language is to him a crystal medium through which to let us see the play of his humor, the glow of his sympathy, and the truth of his observation" (*Southern Literary Messenger,* June 1851). As Hawthorne's work continued to make itself a felt presence in the United States and in England and Scotland, reviewers stuck fairly close to the practice of describing the features of his art by linking their discussion of them to Hawthorne's mental and emotional traits. Whether commenting on such sunshiny characters as Phoebe or such dark ones as Miriam's model, reviewers recognized Hawthorne's ability to depict a range of characters from the bright-hearted to the melancholic, although few of them seemed to become so fixed and fascinated by the "blackness in Hawthorne" as did Herman Melville ("Hawthorne and His Mosses," *Literary World,* March 1850). Whipple spoke not only for himself but for other reviewers when he said that *The Blithedale Romance* "is a real organism of the mind, with the strict unity of one of Nature's own creations. It seems to have grown up in the author's nature" (*Graham's Magazine,* September 1852). Thirty years later an English reviewer of *Dr. Grimshawe's Secret* was still insisting that Hawthorne's talents and appeal resulted from his peculiar powers: "What is striking in the

New England part of *Dr. Grimshawe's Secret* is the power, so unique in Hawthorne, of exciting conflicting emotions which seem, so to say, to curdle each other in the imagination of the reader, and sunder the different elements they contain almost as acid curdles milk, and separates it into curds and whey" (*Spectator,* 30 December 1882).

Over the span of Hawthorne's literary career and the period when his uncompleted romances and notebooks were appearing, critics and reviewers, with some pointed exceptions (a few of them stemming from criticism based on moral or religious approaches to literature), found themselves using similar terms when they analyzed the features of Hawthorne's art. Not having been schooled in a critical vocabulary as extensive as our own and writing mostly for a popular readership, reviewers of Hawthorne's era nonetheless touched on many aspects of Hawthorne's art: diction, tone, description, narration, characterization, conceptive and analytic powers, interest in psychology, reliance on gothic or supernatural elements, use of symbols, preference for the ideal over the realistic, and his hope of creating a national literature.

Linking diction with style, reviewers, beginning with those who responded to *Fanshawe,* described Hawthorne's language as "elegant," "chaste," "graceful," "delicate," "clear," "poetic," "pure," "concise," "concentrated," "graphic," "natural," and "appropriate." A typical early comment is that of Evert A. Duyckinck on *Twice-told Tales:* "The poetical temperament is beneath every page, moulding, modifying every thought, coloring every topic of commonplace with the hues of fancy and sensibility" (*Arcturus,* May 1841). Writing of Hawthorne's language as he had responded to it in the recently issued *Septimius Felton* and *Fanshawe,* Bayard Taylor, reflecting on Hawthorne's other published writings, including the six volumes of Hawthorne's notebooks, concluded that "the purity, the unstudied picturesqueness, and the pensive grace of his diction were developed with the broader range of his observation of life, and the deeper reach of his individual vision. They cannot be studied as something apart from the latter, and attained by a nature differently endowed" (New York *Tribune,* 7 July 1876). Hawthorne's diction and style in his nonfiction brought similar praise when an unidentified reviewer of *Our Old Home* (1863) observed, "[Hawthorne's] words are choice, but with no evidences of fastidiousness or daintiness; his sentences are compact, but not stiff; they are constructed with a careful elegance, but are free and fluent, and have a masculine vigor" (*New York Times,* 28 November 1863). Thus, early or late, in fiction as in nonfiction, Hawthorne earned plaudits for his effort to achieve a clear, easy style and, as Margaret Fuller described his work in the *New York Daily Tribune,* "an indolent command of language" (22 June 1846), for Hawthorne's aim was to create a style that would not call attention to itself.

A style and diction that led some of Hawthorne's readers and admirers to refer to him as Mr. Noble Melancholy most assuredly had much to do with terms used to describe Hawthorne's tone. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, who

knew him from their years together at Bowdoin College, was one among many to react to Hawthorne's fascination with dark, gloomy themes: "Indeed, over all that he has written, there hangs, like an atmosphere, a certain soft and calm melancholy, which has nothing diseased or mawkish in it, but is of that kind which seems to flow naturally from delicacy of organization and a meditative spirit" (*North American Review,* April 1842). Almost a year earlier, Evert A. Duyckinck, in his review of the second edition of *Twice-told Tales,* had found "a fanciful pathos delighting in sepulchral images" to be "the distinctive mark of Hawthorne's writings" but had insisted that Hawthorne was "not a gloomy writer—his melancholy is fanciful, capricious" (*Arcturus,* May 1841). Unlike Melville, Duyckinck was not fixed and fascinated by the "blackness in Hawthorne" but was uplifted to discover that, as a "physician . . . probing the depths of human sorrow," Hawthorne could "minister to the mind diseased" (*Arcturus,* May 1861). Much of that ministry stemmed from Hawthorne's "calm, and meditative" handling of both morals and pathos, as Park Benjamin was early to recognize (*American Monthly Magazine,* March 1838). Although there were exceptions, most notably among clerics such as Arthur Cleveland Coxe in his condemnation of Hawthorne's Frenchified themes in *The Scarlet Letter,* most reviewers considered the moral tone of Hawthorne's writing fit and bracing. Some acknowledged that he could be skeptical, even cynical, satiric, comic, serious, ironic, tragic, or lighthearted when occasion or character dictated a change from his usual thoughtful approach to a sketch, tale, or romance. That Hawthorne had to struggle with his tendency to draw toward a "darkening close" in his work is well known, the prevention of which led him to brighten the ending of *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851). If he had anticipated the complaints of some reviewers of *The Blithedale Romance,* (1852), he would, perhaps, as one of them suggested, have granted Zenobia a husband and bestowed upon her a "numerous progeny" (*Southern Quarterly Review,* new series, October 1852). Indeed, the reputation for morbidity and gloom that Sophia tried to eradicate was too well identified as a prominent tone of Hawthorne's art for anyone to dispel. Yet the sunshine was too bright to be ignored. For many reviewers that mixture of light and shade, of the comic and the tragic, of the realistic and the romantic gave Hawthorne's work a richness and complexity that led critics, early and late, to think of Hawthorne's as a major talent.

Choosing just what terms to use when treating Hawthorne's descriptive powers proved far easier than finding words for his many tones. From the early comments of Park Benjamin on through the more detailed analysis of Edwin Whipple, Hawthorne's pictorialism educed such terms as "graphic," "vivid," "picturesque" (the most favored choice), "minute," "exact," and "delicate." Anne Abbott's praise of Hawthorne's descriptions in her *North American Review* article on *The Scarlet Letter*—"We know of no writer who better understands and combines the elements of the picturesque in writing than Mr. Haw-

thorne" (July 1850)—gains specificity in Henry Tuckerman's comments on *The House of the Seven Gables:* "In [Hawthorne's] details we have the truth, simplicity, and exact imitation of the Flemish painters. So life-like is the minutiae and so picturesque in general effect are these sketches of still-life, that they are daguerreotyped in the reader's mind, and form a distinct and changeless background, the light and shade of which give admirable effect to the action of the story" (*Southern Literary Messenger,* June 1851). No wonder then, since he deliberately set out to give his second romance "the minuteness of a Dutch picture" (*CE,* XVI, p. 371), that Hawthorne received Tuckerman's review so favorably. Here was someone who knew, and appreciated, exactly what Hawthorne was doing. His painterly qualities appeared in both his fiction and sketches, appealing to both his American and his British readers except when Hawthorne's graphic depictions of elephantine British women evoked the gallantry and patriotism of a few English critics.

Hawthorne's narrative practices were too diverse to draw the unanimity of response that his descriptive powers drew. Many reviewers noted Hawthorne's partiality to allegory, as did Edgar Allan Poe: "A strain of allegory . . . completely overwhelms the greater number of his subjects, and . . . in some measure interferes with the direct conduct of absolutely all" (*Godey's Magazine and Lady's Book,* November 1847). Troubled himself that he did not know what some of his "blasted allegories" meant, Hawthorne nonetheless remained too much under the sway of Spenser and Bunyan ever to abandon this narrative mode. But it was not his addiction to allegory that bothered some reviewers. Reacting to the assortment of tales and sketches published in *Twice-told Tales,* a reviewer for the *Boston Miscellany of Literature and Fashion,* perhaps Nathan Hale, Jr., called Hawthorne's work "half tale and half essay" and added, "Mr. Hawthorne's stories rarely contain much outward action. He contents himself with unveiling the movements of the inner man, and the growth of motive and reflection, while the outward world is quiet or forgotten" (February 1842). The complaint lodged here, if indeed it is that, reveals something of the challenge Hawthorne faced as he tried to establish himself as a writer more concerned with psychology than with bustle. Even though Hawthorne sometimes yearned to write as realistically as Anthony Trollope, he continued his practice as a romancer, giving up realistic treatment of material for ideas and ideals he wished to explore and dissect. He continued to work toward a goal that a reviewer for the New York *World* detected: Hawthorne's peculiar power "to make a reader seem himself to fashion romances" (18 December 1882). To assume that role, the reader might have to don the garb of a lover of gothic tales, a devotee of the mystic and mythic, a fan of science fiction, or a champion of social causes if Hawthorne's tales were to be read and accepted as he wanted them to be.

His variety of narrative modes reflects Hawthorne's goal of dealing with New England history, examining the inner nature of man, showing scenes from his

own times, mocking a few aspirations of his fellow citizens, exploring the nature of narrative itself, and finding just the right vehicle for the varied characters he had to present. Reviewers were able to spot, and appreciate, the diversity of his characters. One reviewer, William W. S. Dutton, writing for the *New Englander,* said, "His personages are not all the same, with different names and circumstances, but they preserve their individuality, and so stand out upon the canvas that we can immediately recognize them" (January 1847). Repeatedly reviewers pointed out that Hawthorne presented his characters distinctively, dwelt intensely on their inner natures, and focused his attention on tracing the relation of character to moral or spiritual law. Many of them agreed with Edwin Whipple's remark, about the characters in *The Blithedale Romance,* that "characters are not really valuable for what they are, but for what they illustrate" (*Graham's Magazine,* September 1852). Indeed, the most common gripe of critics, from Mary Russell Mitford to Henry James, was that Hawthorne presented ideas or abstractions in action rather than characters fashioned of blood, bone, and sinew.

Hawthorne's ability to depict a distinctive and wide range of characters argued for original conceptual powers, an attribute Edgar Allan Poe elegantly praised in his first review of Hawthorne. Writing of the enlarged edition of *Twice-told Tales* for the May 1842 issue of *Graham's,* Poe asserted, "Mr. Hawthorne's distinctive trait is invention, creation, imagination, originality—a trait which, in the literature of fiction, is positively worth all the rest." His conceptual originality seemed as fertile in his pieces for juveniles and no less interesting than his inventive powers in works for mature readers. Although Poe was later to retract his claim for Hawthorne's originality, contending that Hawthorne's lack of popular appeal could be traced to his derivativeness (*Godey's,* November 1847), reviewers continued to note Hawthorne's inventiveness, not always favorably—a writer for the *Salem Register* disdainfully remarking of the *Life of Franklin Pierce* that Hawthorne's "imaginative powers are manifestly in full vigor yet" (13 September 1852). Malice underlay both claims. Poe had come to link Hawthorne with the Boston circle of writers, many of whom he considered slavish imitators of European writers, and the anonymous reviewer for the *Salem Register* sharpened his political ax in his castigation of Hawthorne's biography of his old college classmate. While it is true, as Poe says, that Hawthorne had affinities with such German writers as Tieck, Hawthorne certainly was not to be paired with Irving, Longfellow, or anyone else drawing heavily on European models. Poe's first impression was just and one he should have stood by: "[Hawthorne's] *originality* both of incident and of reflection is very remarkable; this trait alone would ensure him at least *our* warmest regard and commendation" (*Graham's,* April 1842).

One of the most original of Hawthorne's traits was his ability to do what Henry Giles described as "psychological painting" when he reviewed *The Scarlet Letter* for *Holden's Dollar Magazine* (June 1850). Tuckerman affirmed this

description by writing that both *The Scarlet Letter* and *The House of the Seven Gables* were "fine studies for the psychologist" (*Southern Literary Messenger,* June 1851). Struck by the same thing, Amory Dwight Mayo observed that "Mr. Hawthorne's books [embrace] the natural history of the mind in its ordinary, but more often in its extraordinary conditions" (*Universalist Quarterly,* July 1851). So accustomed had readers and reviewers become to Hawthorne's practice of probing the inner person that the reviewer of *Transformation* (*The Marble Faun*) for the *Westminster Review* could assert categorically: "To praise the romance for a remarkable power of psychological analysis, to say it abounds in piquant remarks and striking views, is only to say it is a book of Hawthorne's" (April 1860). Other reviewers were similarly impressed by Hawthorne's close and profound scrutiny of motives, deeds, and their consequences but lacked a Freud, Jung, or Lacan to supply them with a vocabulary to express their insights. Drawing on terms in use since before the days of John Locke, some reviewers considered Hawthorne a natural philosopher. That is clearly the notion that both Elizabeth Palmer Peabody and Lewis Gaylord Clark entertained when they spoke of his work as "philosophic" (Peabody, *New-Yorker,* March 1838) and "replete with deep thought and searching analysis of the human heart" (Clark, *Knickerbocker,* November 1837).

An inchoate vocabulary was not a problem when reviewers addressed Hawthorne's subject matter and political outlook. A zeal to have American writers recognized as the peers of their European counterparts informs the appraisals by many of Hawthorne's countrymen, including Longfellow, Charles Wilkins Webber, and Melville. Longfellow underscored his hope that American letters had received a praiseworthy boost by writing of the first edition of *Twice-told Tales:* "One of the most prominent characteristics of these tales is, that they are national in their character" (*North American Review,* July 1837). He repeated the description in his 1842 review of the enlarged edition of *Twice-told Tales.* Webber, patriotic to the core, proclaimed, "Hawthorne is national—national in subject, in treatment and in manner" (*American Whig Review,* September 1846). Melville's flag-waving is no less energetic. In keeping with Young America's dream of one day catching and passing British writers, Melville, not apologizing for mentioning Nathaniel of Salem in the same breath as William of Stratford, spoke imperatively: "Call him an American and have done, for you cannot say a nobler thing of him" ("Hawthorne and His Mosses," *Literary World,* 17 August 1850). Although Hawthorne's English reviewers would surely have debated the second clause in Melville's sentence, most of them would have agreed with an anonymous English writer for *The Examiner* who began his review of *Passages from the American Note-Books of Nathaniel Hawthorne* by calling attention to the American flavor of Hawthorne's writing:

> Of the great prose writers of America, Mr. Hawthorne is the most characteristic and, therefore, the most interesting. In his books it is always an

> American who is speaking, and an American of rare and peculiar genius. . . . Among the smaller authors of America there is no doubt much that is purely American and nothing else. But, then, in no real sense can it be called national; it is merely local and provincial. . . . Now the great charm about Mr. Hawthorne arises from the fact that, while he is distinctively American in his writings, there is nowhere a trace of narrow thought or contracted sympathy. (26 December 1868)

Hawthorne's words about grossly overweight English women gave some reviewers cause to question Hawthorne's sympathy and goodwill toward things English, but even those who rose to defend English womanhood admired the peculiarly American voice in Hawthorne's writing.

Part of the peculiarity of Hawthorne's voice was his preference for the romance over the novel. As he recognized, English writers and readers wanted real ale and beef in their fiction—realism, in short, as opposed to allegory, romance, or moralized tales and sketches. As much as he sometimes wished to write in Trollope's realistic manner, he kept returning to nonrealistic modes to help him explore characters, develop themes, and establish structures. His failure to provide enough beef and ale bothered Melville, Mary Russell Mitford, Poe, and scores of other critics. Many readers and reviewers joined William Dean Howells, Mary Russell Mitford, Henry James, and Mark Twain in wishing for something much more novelistic than Hawthorne had been able, or willing, to give. The insistent English push for more realism led Hawthorne to do something uncharacteristic when he added a postscript to *The Marble Faun*. But it remained, even so, quite characteristic of his manner, for he would not clear up the mysteries in ways that a realistic novelist would have done so. Rather than wooing admirers of novelistic realism, Hawthorne yearned for readers such as the American historian John Lothrop Motley, who appreciated and enjoyed Hawthorne's "misty way" of presenting his story. In Hawthorne's view, the romance afforded the reader a chance to "half make the book" with his own "warm imagination" (*CE,* XVIII, pp. 256–8). As a writer of romances rather than novels, Hawthorne wanted not only a neutral territory between realism and idealism but also the mystery afforded a scene or character when viewed by moonlight—a point insistently made in the essay "The Custom House" in *The Scarlet Letter.*

No doubt, reading Hawthorne's romances would have been easier if reviewers and general readers had been more fully aware that he often wrote symbolically. Even with liberal allowances made for the fact that symbolism was not a sharply focused critical concept in the minds of many Victorian reviewers, surprisingly little is said about Hawthorne's use of symbols. The roughly synonymous "type" and "emblem" also rarely appear. The description by an anonymous reviewer of *The Scarlet Letter* as a "symbolic story" in the

Boston Post (21 March 1850) is a rarity. A later age would, of course, make much of Hawthorne as a symbolist. Few of his contemporaries so labeled him.

If some of the more innovative features of Hawthorne's art gave reviewers pause, few of them hesitated to compare him and his style and art with other American, English, and European authors and their manner and artistry. Much about Hawthorne's genius and the diversity of his art surfaced as reviewers tried to tell readers which writers they found Hawthorne to resemble. Here it was this writer's style; there, that writer's themes; yet elsewhere, this writer's depth and breadth of knowledge and that writer's understanding of human behavior. The long list of writers with whom Hawthorne was compared or contrasted is indeed revealing: Irving, John Neal, Charles Brockden Brown, Poe, and Cooper among leading American authors; Addison, Johnson, De Quincey, Pope, Lamb, Bunyan, Defoe, John Webster, Sir Thomas Browne, Scott, Dickens, Byron, Jeremy Taylor, and Bulwer-Lytton among English and Scottish writers; Cervantes, Tieck, Richter, Hoffmann, Goethe, Andersen, Euripides, and Aeschylus among Continental masters.

Most frequently mentioned among his countrymen was Washington Irving, at first with the declaration that the anonymous author of "The Gentle Boy" could be considered "the most pleasing writer of fanciful prose, except Irving, in the country" (Park Benjamin, *New-England Magazine,* October 1835). Over the years, many voices were to echo Benjamin's. Initially, most reviewers placed Hawthorne a close second, but in time he clearly stood as Irving's equal or superior. With understandable pride in his college classmate, Horatio Bridge wrote that "the author of *Twice-told Tales* bids fair, ere long, to rank second to no prose writers in America" (*The Age,* 22 March 1837). Somewhat tentatively but nonetheless bravely, Caroline Gilman said, "It may seem like heresy, but to us there is more animation in the style, with as much purity, and good sense, as in the writings of Irving" (*Southern Rose,* 8 July 1837). Sounding more like a sober-minded academic critic than an old college chum, Longfellow, writing in the prestigious *North American Review,* remarked, "We are disposed, on the strength of these works [the first two editions of *Twice-told Tales*], to accord to Mr. Hawthorne a high rank among the writers of this country, and to predict, that his contributions to its imaginative literature will enjoy a permanent and increasing reputation" (April 1842). For once agreeing with Longfellow, Poe declared, "We have seen no prose compositions by any American which can compare with *some* of these articles in the highest merits, or indeed in the lower" (*Graham's Magazine,* April 1842). As American reviewers were agreeing to treat Hawthorne as Irving's equal or better, *Blackwood's* was still certain that Irving held the high ground in "taste and judgment" while yielding to Hawthorne in "thought and reflection" (March 1847). The *Blackwood's* critic went on to show that a more suitable comparison could be drawn between Poe and Hawthorne. Once these comparisons had been made in the 1830s and

1840s, Hawthorne's place was fixed near or at the top of the first rank of American writers. The success of his romances confirmed the judgment to reviewers of his tales and sketches. Hawthorne received the laurels as America's first man of letters, an honor both his American and his English admirers agreed on bestowing. After reading such posthumously published works as *Septimius Felton,* later critics claimed that the crown still belonged to him. An anonymous piece in *The Saturday Review* (20 July 1872) insisted that "Hawthorne may be pronounced with little hesitation to have been by far the finest literary artist whom America has yet produced." A few months later, Thomas Wentworth Higginson observed succinctly, "Hawthorne was our great literary artist" (*Scribner's,* November 1872).

First among the names of English authors whom Hawthorne was thought to resemble were those of Lamb and Addison (with the addition of Steele of *The Spectator*). Park Benjamin considered "The Rill from the Town-Pump" something Elia might have done (*American Monthly Magazine,* March 1838), and Evert Duyckinck soon joined Benjamin and others in linking the names of Lamb and Hawthorne. Charles Webber, proud to have Hawthorne as a contender for international honors, enthusiastically proclaimed, "[Hawthorne] is to the Present and Future what Charles Lamb was to the Past" (*American Whig Review,* September 1846). Subject matter, tone, and perceived similarity of outlook on human behavior led several reviewers to offer Lamb as Hawthorne's closest English predecessor, but Addison's name frequently cropped up as well. Hawthorne's easy, graceful, natural, unselfconscious style seemed most like Addison's (or Steele's). Hawthorne's interest in sepulchral themes reminded Duyckinck of John Webster's plays, Jeremy Taylor's essays on dying, and Sir Thomas Browne's musings on burial customs (*Arcturus,* May 1841). Unsurprisingly, Henry Fothergill Chorley, on reading "The Celestial Railroad" and other allegorical tales, thought of John Bunyan (*Athenaeum,* 8 August 1846). It was Hawthorne's "predilection for rather painful problems of ethical and psychological interests" that persuaded an anonymous reviewer for the *Illustrated London News* to pair Hawthorne's name with Bulwer-Lytton's (23 July 1870). Elaborating on something that American reviewers early responded to—but without their spelling out why—Henry Bright saw Hawthorne's "strain of passion and poetic expression" as something quite similar to the early "outpourings of De Quincey" (*The Examiner,* 31 March 1860).

When Hawthorne turned from essays, sketches, and tales to romances, reviewers started to compare and contrast him with past and contemporary British novelists. Time and again, the names of Goldsmith and Scott recurred as reviewers sought to suggest the quality of Hawthorne's work—Goldsmith for ease and naturalness of style, Scott for graphic description, to take the features thought to be most similar. The graphic sharpness of Hawthorne's writing also reminded some critics of George Eliot and Dickens, although a few were quick to add that Hawthorne and Dickens shared an outlook that placed high value

on humor and humanity. Among other novelists brought forward were Defoe, Fielding, Reade, and Thackeray. With few exceptions, such as Reade, Hawthorne was readily and continually linked to Britain's foremost writers of novels and romances, many of whom Hawthorne both cherished and read repeatedly, especially Scott.

Melville stood almost alone in proclaiming the justice of writing the names of Hawthorne and Shakespeare on the same page. Perhaps because he believed his proclamation to be unthinkable to many readers and critics, Melville, in explaining why the linkage made sense, went to more trouble than most other reviewers, fixing on the darkness in Shakespeare's tragedies, especially his dark characters, as the types of humans Hawthorne, too, wanted to draw and have his readers understand. If Hawthorne ultimately did not match Shakespeare, the approach was far nearer than anyone had dared say. Melville, with something of the voice of Young America speaking through him, boldly declared the approach ("Hawthorne and His Mosses," *Literary World,* 17 and 24 August 1850).

So diverse and rich were Hawthorne's works that reviewers saw elements as much, or more, akin to the writings of some Continental favorites—the names most often mentioned being Tieck, Hoffmann, Fouqué, Richter, Goethe, Balzac, and Cervantes. The elements of terror, the supernatural, the mystical, and the mysterious linked Hawthorne's fiction to that of the German romantics. Hawthorne's range and diversity of interests seemed similar to Balzac's, and his ability to appreciate the humor in mankind's round of trials, tribulations, and triumphs recalled Cervantes's outlook. But the apparent seduction of Hawthorne by George Sand and Eugene Sue left one critic, the cleric Arthur Cleveland Coxe, aghast. The theme and its treatment in *The Scarlet Letter* looked too much like the "Brothel Library" of these decadent French writers, and Coxe hoped to rescue Hawthorne before he pushed on to the "brokerage of lust" (*Church Review and Ecclesiastical Register,* January 1851).

As the American critic Henry Giles observed, "We are fond, in our American criticism, of comparisons" (*Boston Daily Courier,* 5 April 1860). To show his own fondness for the practice, and to suggest still another name, this one just because of Hawthorne's efforts to see the tragic consequences of human error and the grand possibilities for humanity's achievements, Giles offered the name of Aeschylus. Here surely was a recognition of the potent drama of the best of Hawthorne's fiction: "Roger Malvin's Burial," "Ethan Brand," "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," "Rappaccini's Daughter," "Young Goodman Brown," *The Scarlet Letter, The Blithedale Romance,* and *The Marble Faun.*

As that list suggests, Americans are also fond of ranking literary works, eagerly selecting works to place in order from high to low from the corpus of a given writer or choosing works from the same genre to rank from top to bottom. It appears, however, that American reviewers share this fondness for ranking things with those of many other nations. Certainly, the British re-

viewers covered in this survey were not slow to identify their favorite Hawthorne pieces.

Although it is true that neither British nor American reviewers settled into any formal patterns for announcing their preferences among Hawthorne's sketches, tales, romances, and notebooks, some did occasionally point to a particular favorite. Others chose to mention or discuss some sketch or tale while ignoring the short pieces altogether. The majority placed *The Scarlet Letter* as the best of Hawthorne's romances and accorded it a high position among the great works of world literature.

Before "Sights from a Steeple" was identified as Hawthorne's, it won praise from an anonymous reviewer for the *New-England Magazine,* who called it a "sketch of uncommon merit" (November 1832). Together with "Sunday at Home," "Little Annie's Ramble," and "The Toll-Gatherer's Day," "Sights from a Steeple" drew attention from most of Hawthorne's early reviewers. Judging from the times it was mentioned, discussed, reprinted in part or in full by reviewers, clearly "A Rill from the Town Pump" led all other sketches in popularity. Commenting on its widespread appeal, Horatio Bridge wrote, "It embodies the prevailing public sentiment upon a topic of universal interest" (*The Age,* 5 April 1837). Longfellow reprinted it in his review of *Twice-told Tales* in the *North American Review,* and Elizabeth Palmer Peabody (Hawthorne's sister-in-law-to-be), Caleb Foote, Park Benjamin, and an anonymous reviewer for the Boston *Daily Advertiser* looked upon it as one of Hawthorne's most characteristic pieces. Poe can supply the summarizing statement. He recorded that the sketch "attracted more public notice than any other of Mr. Hawthorne's compositions." Poe himself found it "perhaps the *least* meritorious" (*Graham's Magazine,* April 1842). The sketches published in *Mosses from an Old Manse* and *The Snow-Image* caused little stir among reviewers. Melville found "Fire-Worship" deserving of a few kind words, and other critics responded favorably to "Buds and Bird-Voices," "The Old Apple-Dealer," and "A Bell's Biography." Having granted that Hawthorne competed well with Addison, Steele, and Lamb as an essayist, both American and British reviewers spent more time considering his fiction.

Despite Hawthorne's anonymity, a few of his tales began claiming a place for themselves as distinguished American fiction, among them "The Gray Champion," "The Minister's Black Veil," and "The Gentle Boy." Park Benjamin forthrightly declared that the author of this last tale, about Puritan intolerance and Quaker zeal, here wrote "some of the most delicate and beautiful prose ever published on this side of the Atlantic" (*New-England Magazine,* October 1834). Joining Benjamin in singling out the tale as either one of Hawthorne's best or most representative were Caleb Foote (*Salem Gazette,* 7 March 1837), Elizabeth Palmer Peabody (*New-Yorker,* March 1838), and Longfellow, who concluded on seeing the expanded edition of *Twice-told Tales* that the piece was the "finest thing [Hawthorne] ever wrote" (*North American Review,* April

1842). The anonymous pieces attracting attention in England were "David Swan," reprinted in its entirety by Henry Fothergill Chorley in *Athenaeum* (5 November 1836); "The Minister's Black Veil," recommended the year before to Chorley's readers; and "The Gray Champion," "The Maypole of Merrymount," and "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment," chosen by G.P.R. James as representative pieces in his review for the *Foreign and Colonial Quarterly Review* (October 1843). When "The Gentle Boy" did evoke a response in England, the notice was terse and damning: "We confess we cannot tell what to make of this sentimental rhapsody" (*Literary Gazette,* 22 June 1839).

After Hawthorne's fame began to spread following publication of the first (1837) and then the expanded edition of *Twice-told Tales* (1842), more tales came under scrutiny as more space was given to reviews of his works. The frequent notices of "The Minister's Black Veil," "The Gray Champion," "The Wedding Knell," and "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment" suggest that these tales joined "The Gentle Boy" as top contenders for Hawthorne's best. Only Poe seems to have found "Wakefield" a member of that select group (*Graham's Magazine,* April 1842).

The appearance of *Mosses from an Old Manse* (1846) offered some new contenders, even though Evert Duyckinck was already stating a case for the heretofore uncollected "Young Goodman Brown." Indeed, that gloomy tale of loss of faith in Puritan New England soon received much attention. Chorley listed it alongside "The Birth-Mark," and "The Celestial Rail-Road" as a first-rate story (*Athenaeum,* 8 August 1846). The most extensive treatment accorded any Hawthorne story up to this time was soon to be centered on "Young Goodman Brown" when Charles Wilkins Webber spent pages analyzing it as an example of Hawthorne's powerful treatment of an American subject (*American Whig Review,* September 1846). Better known, however, than Webber's spirited, insightful response is Melville's, published 24 August 1850 in his belated review, "Hawthorne and His Mosses" (*Literary World,* 17 and 24 August 1850). Making far less of a splash at this time were "The Birth-Mark," "Rappaccini's Daughter," and "The Artist of the Beautiful." An anonymous reviewer for *Blackwood's* found the first and last of these preposterous and improbable but did respect "Roger Malvin's Burial" for its strong narration. The unveiling of Hawthorne himself, modest as he pretended it to be in his preface to *Mosses,* prompted response from many reviewers, who welcomed this opportunity to learn something more about him. He was now a felt and potentially powerful force in American and British letters, and reviewers clearly sensed that readers were hungry for more information about this self-styled obscurest man in American letters.

Considered as collections, *Twice-told Tales* and *Mosses from an Old Manse* won more praise and admiration from reviewers on both sides of the Atlantic than did *The Snow-Image.* All three collections, however, seemed to some reviewers to represent Hawthorne at his best, for many thought his forte was

the tale or sketch, his romances sometimes being seen as thin or improbable in plot and too shadowy in characterization. The brilliance and sustained power revealed in the three collections were enough to lead reviewer after reviewer to pronounce Hawthorne America's leading storyteller, Melville's pronouncement perhaps being the most enthusiastic. For such reviewers as Melville and Poe, more than enthusiasm resulted from a reading of these tales: Melville found "germinous seeds" in the stories gathered in *Mosses,* and the same collection prompted Poe to describe the short story's characteristics and thereby lay a foundation for both writers and reviewers when they created or criticized short fiction.

When Hawthorne turned from short fiction to romances, reviewers, with few exceptions, quickly agreed that his reach had not exceeded his grasp. Without knowing that Hawthorne had once tried his hand at longer fiction, a reviewer for the *Boston American Traveller* declared while reviewing the expanded edition of *Twice-told Tales* that "Mr. Hawthorne is as capable of writing a work of fiction, completed in all its parts, as either Miss Sedgwick, Fay, or Simms, and far more so than Cooper or Ingraham. Indeed, we are by no means sure that equal practice would not make him a powerful rival of Dickens" (1 February 1842). Once Hawthorne returned to the romance, he immediately established himself, as we have seen, as a front-rank romancer; and as soon as he had two romances to compare and contrast, reviewers began picking a favorite, a practice in which Hawthorne himself sometimes indulged. Even before *The House of the Seven Gables* appeared, reviewers started predicting a great future for *The Scarlet Letter.* Lewis Gaylord Clark believed that the work "would take a high rank among modern American works of fiction" (*Knickerbocker,* March 1850), and an anonymous reviewer for the *Portland Transcript* declared, "The work will give its author a high place among our writers, and a worldwide fame" (30 March 1850). Joining in the chorus of praise and making similar forecasts were Theodore Parker (*Massachusetts Quarterly Review,* June 1850) and an anonymous reviewer for *Albion* (6 April 1850).

Before *The House of the Seven Gables* saw print, Hawthorne was confiding his preference for it over *The Scarlet Letter,* possibly because, though it darkened toward the close more than might have been indicative of his sunny disposition, it did not send Mrs. Hawthorne off to bed with a terrific headache as *The Scarlet Letter* had. Hawthorne told both James Fields, his publisher, and Bridge that he liked it better than *The Scarlet Letter* (*CE,* XVI, pp. 386, 406), although he acknowledged to Fields a pattern of fickleness in responding to his own work. When his second romance appeared, a few reviewers shared Hawthorne's preference, among them the reviewer who came to be both a leading admirer and, at least on one occasion, a consultant, Edwin Whipple. Writing for *Graham's Magazine,* Whipple said, "Taken as a whole, it is Hawthorne's greatest work, and is equally sure of immediate popularity and permanent

fame" (June 1851). George Ripley stood with Whipple, asserting that the piece was "unsurpassed by any thing [Hawthorne] has yet written" (*Harper's New Monthly Magazine,* May 1851). (Whipple was later to have a change of heart about *The House of the Seven Gables* when he read *The Blithedale Romance.*) Against Hawthorne and his supporters, Amory Dwight Mayo argued that "*The House of the Seven Gables* is inferior to *The Scarlet Letter* in artistic proportion, compactness and sustained power. It is not a jet of molten ore from a glowing furnace, but a work elaborated in thoughtful leisure, characterized by a more sober coloring, and less intensity of life than its predecessor" (*Universalist Quarterly,* July 1851). Considering the two novels together years later, Anthony Trollope found *The House of the Seven Gables* "very inferior" to *The Scarlet Letter.* Hawthorne's first novel came from within and Hawthorne "had it to write," but he wrote the second because "he had to write it" (*North American Review,* September 1879).

Expectedly, the sorting process concerning which romance to place on top attracted more attention upon publication of *The Blithedale Romance.* The reviewer for the *Boston Daily Evening Transcript* spoke out strongly in favor of the newcomer: "We do not hesitate to rank it above *The Scarlet Letter* and *The House of the Seven Gables* in depth, fertility, precision and subtlety of thought, in richness and variety of characterization" (10 July 1852). Whipple deemed it the "most perfect in execution of any of Hawthorne's works" and insisted that it "does not yield in interest or value to any of Hawthorne's preceding works" (*Graham's Magazine,* September 1852). Not willing to offer a rank ordering, the reviewer for the *Southern Quarterly Review* judged the work to be "as successful, as a work of art, as any of the preceding volumes" of Hawthorne (October 1852). Looking back on Hawthorne's achievement some years after his death, reviewers for both the *North British Review* (September 1868) and *Athenaeum* (12 December 1868) found his third romance unsurpassed. But not every reviewer agreed. In its graphic castigation of Hawthorne's shortcomings in *The Blithedale Romance,* the *Dublin University Magazine* (October 1855) complained that "*The Blithedale Romance* lies more open than any other to unsparing and well-deserved ridicule—in the characters especially; one is inflated to bursting with about as much success as the old frog of old, another insipid; another wishy-washy; and the hero of the tale himself . . . an impertinent sort of eavesdropper."

Whether considered as an example of self-serving "political biography" or as a piece of campaign literature, Hawthorne's *Life of Franklin Pierce* (1852) raised questions about Hawthorne's role as an American artist. Coming down hard on Hawthorne, a reviewer for the *New-York Daily Times* commented, "The biography is of small moment, and serves to show how little can be said for Mr. Pierce" (25 September 1852). And not so tongue-in-cheek was an anonymous quip in *The Union:* "Hawthorne's Life of Pierce is out, and is as

pleasant reading as the best of the author's romances" (16 September 1852). The fact that reviewers included the work among Hawthorne's romances says far less about Hawthorne's art than about their partisan politics.

The hiatus occasioned by his consular duties and Italian sojourn concerned Hawthorne upon his return to writing and publishing *The Marble Faun* (1860), or *Transformation,* as the English edition was called. In his own wishy-washiness, Hawthorne at times believed that *The Marble Faun* deserved top billing. He would have found it a challenge to convince reviewers that he was right. A reviewer for the Philadelphia *Press* concluded that it was "superior to them all, excepting *The Scarlet Letter*" (7 March 1860). British and American reviewers alike discovered reasons to downgrade the book, the review in the *New York Times* (24 March 1860) pointing out: "In his worthier works, Hawthorne has commonly succeeded in troubling the waters of imagination to the infinite good of his readers. In this he simply reveals the troubling, not of his own imagination alone, but of his intellect, and even of his conscience." Without stating reasons for placing it at the bottom, the reviewer for the *Westminster Review* pointedly stated, "It is in our opinion by no means equal to either of the author's three previous works" (April 1860). Even so, Leslie Stephen was to conclude a few years later (December 1872) that *Transformation* (the English title of the romance) "generally passes for [Hawthorne's] masterpiece" (*Cornhill Magazine*).

How to respond to Hawthorne's fragmentary or uncompleted romances presented special problems. Nearly everyone agreed that the master's touch could be spotted in each of them, many commenting on the unmistakability of authorship, Hawthorne's themes, style, tone, and characterization being so singular. A bothersome issue was that of whether Hawthorne's reputation was injured by the publication of pieces he may have abandoned because he recognized inherent and, perhaps, incurable problems. An anonymous reviewer of *Pansie* (1864) commented in *The Spectator* on the Hawthornean touches in the pirated fragment and added the insightful remark that the typical Hawthornean elements had been "toned down into the sort of depth that age gives to great paintings" (17 September 1864). *Septimius Felton* (1872) received a warm welcome from reviewers, a few sure that no other living writer could produce anything as good. Hawthorne's longtime friend and admirer Henry Bright, writing for *Athenaeum* (22 June 1872), greeted its appearance with: "Of course, it cannot take rank with Hawthorne's finished work, but no other author of our time could have written it." The welcome mat, however, was not out at the *Southern Magazine* (September 1872): "We feel entitled by our study of Hawthorne's other works to pronounce *Septimius* a romance he threw aside in disgust because he found that for him it was not worth completing." Writing under the pseudonym of H. Lawrenny, Edith Simcox proffered the highest praise: "Of all Hawthorne's works, *Septimius* has most in common with his greatest, *Transformation*" (*The Academy,* 1 November 1872). *The Dolliver*

Romance (1876) was gratefully received by reviewers happy to see anything from Hawthorne's workshop, but complaints about unearthing every scrap in that workshop became louder. With the publication of *Dr. Grimshawe's Secret* (1882), the question of authenticity surfaced for the first time. Few, if any, seriously doubted that the piece was Hawthorne's, for it bore many signs of his peculiar genius, but Julian Hawthorne's claim that he had edited a nearly completed romance left by his father brought a challenge from his sister Rose and her husband, who thought they had seen every fragment of Hawthorne's work and could not recall anything answering Julian's description. A public flap was averted when Julian met with them and discussed extant manuscripts, but as Edward Davidson was later to discover, Julian took many liberties in piecing together Hawthorne's various fragments. Unaware of Julian's editorial doctoring, an anonymous reviewer for the *Westminster Review* found the romance "charming reading . . . characterized by a fineness of observation, a justness and delicacy of appreciation, together with a vividness and dramatic force in the presentment of characters and incidents, which entitle it to rank with the greatest productions of Nathaniel Hawthorne" (April 1883). A critic for the *New Englander* (May 1883) voiced an opposing view: "*Doctor Grimshawe's Secret* must be admitted to be more or less a complete failure." That it might cause harm to Hawthorne's reputation if it were deemed a failure led more than one reviewer to object to its publication, the most succinct disapproval coming from the *Athenaeum*'s reviewer: "No one who respected Hawthorne's memory should have permitted publication of this book" (January 1883).

Unlike his romances, Hawthorne's writings for juveniles and his notebooks prompted few reviewers to express a preference. Warmly welcomed each time they appeared and held to be appropriate reading for adults as well, most of Hawthorne's work for children received brief reviews or simple notices. Most reviewers sounded a note of thanksgiving, believing that youngsters were fortunate indeed to have someone of Hawthorne's stature writing for them: "A greater than PETER PARLEY has appeared. Of all the writers for the young, in England or America, commend us to NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE" was the joyful reception accorded *Biographical Stories for Children* when it appeared in 1842. Typically, reviewers applauded Hawthorne for his story-telling ability, fidelity to New England history, and willingness to put his stories into a style readily understood by young readers. He was accorded the same sort of gratitude that greeted the Lambs upon their publication of *Tales from Shakespeare*.

Historically considered, the publication of a writer's notebooks was something of a rarity in Hawthorne's day. For some reviewers, therefore, their appearance raised a question of propriety. Such was the response of a reviewer for the *British Quarterly Review* when *Passages from the American Note-Books of Nathaniel Hawthorne* (1868) appeared: "We are inclined to think that injustice is done to an author by the publication of a book like this" (April 1869). This

was, however, a minority view. The majority felt privileged to be allowed into Hawthorne's life and creative workshop, many of them pausing to identify the germs of favorite tales or to indicate the extent to which Hawthorne had turned to his notebooks for material to be poured into *The Blithedale Romance*. The peek into his creative incubator provided by the American notebooks continued to linger in the memory of reviewers, several of whom found his English and French and Italian notebooks less rewarding because they offered far more journalistic pages than seeds of new romances. Expressing the difference between the American and the English notebooks, a reviewer for the *Literary World* (1 July 1870) wrote, "The English notebooks differ from the American in one important particular. They deal with more practical matters,—people, cities, customs, cathedrals, natural scenery, etc., and lack the opulence of reflection and imagination which distinguished their predecessor." For reviewers who looked on the notebooks as a substitute for a biography via Hawthorne's accounts of such "practical matters" and the glimpses he gave of himself and his family, the notebooks offered absorbing reading. Given a chance to compare the English notebooks to *Our Old Home,* a reviewer for the *Pall Mall Gazette* (17 August 1870) said, "To our thinking these passages from Mr. Hawthorne's Note-books are even more interesting than the work which he published during his lifetime under the title of *Our Old Home*." Yet, for reviewers eager to reap more information about Hawthorne's own "germinous seeds," the passages lying back of *The Marble Faun* and the uncompleted romances were ample causes for celebration and were appreciated as gratefully as those passages in *Septimius Felton* wherein the doors of Hawthorne's creative workshop were even farther ajar.

Warmly as Hawthorne's work was generally received and quickly as he was rushed to the head of his class among American authors and assigned a position alongside the best of the "scribbling sons of John Bull," to use Hawthorne's term for British writers, Hawthorne did not come away unscathed. Shortcomings were said to exist in his philosophic and theological outlook; his tone; his reliability as a moral guide; his handling of tone, diction, dialogue, characterization, plot, and structure; his use of the supernatural; and his originality. Furthermore, he was charged with improbability and chauvinism. For some reviewers, a more important cause for complaint was the thin texture of his work: It was not realistic enough to suit readers conditioned to expect dense description in novels.

Few reviewers went to the length of the anonymous author of a retrospective piece for the *Southern Review* (April 1870). There Hawthorne was faulted for the "fastidiousness of his conception," his "ingrained reserve," his ambiguity, his "strain of allegory," his "self-consciousness," his lack of force, his trembling "in the presence of his own creations," the dearth of drama in his fiction, and his apprehensiveness in the face of the supernatural. Usually reviewers who considered his works as they appeared took time to note only one or two