Discovery and Rediscovery
EMILY DICKINSON wrote, in loyal response to her "preceptor," Thomas Wentworth Higginson's Short Studies in American Authors (1879), "Hawthorne appalls, entices—" Rather surprisingly in her, hers was a response standard among the generation of serious American readers first after Hawthorne's death. They saw their great romancer to be precisely that. There was something uncanny, perhaps morbid, perhaps sublime, certainly romantic, piercing, and supremely artistic about
him. Obviously, in Hawthorne his native land had produced an authentic genius of literature. The obituary poetry all faithfully said "sorcery." Over Hawthorne's grave, Longfellow lamented,

The wizard hand lies cold. . . .
The unfinished window in Aladdin's tower
Unfinished must remain!^2

Bronson Alcott echoed,

Painter of sin in its deep scarlet dyes,
Thy doomsday pencil Justice doth expose,
Hearing and judging at the dread assize;
New England's guilt blazoning before all eyes,
No other chronicler than thee she chose.
Magician deathless!^3

And so the far less orphic Dr. Holmes recalled, from the Saturday Club, "The Essex wizard's shadowed self. . . ."

The great ROMANCER, hid beneath his veil
Like the stern preacher of his sombre tale;
Virile in strength, yet bashful as a girl,
Prouder than Hester, sensitive as Pearl.^4

Finally, E. C. Stedman, aiming at the definitive poem, the characteristic public verdict of his age, summed up in "Hawthorne," 1877:

Two youths were fostered in the Norseland air;
One found an eagle's plume, and one the wand
Wherewith a seer divines:
Now but the Minstrel lingers of that pair,—
The rod has fallen from the Mage's hand.^6
In the self-conscious United States, breath-takingly and brutally expanding during the post-Civil War decades, such a national treasure as Hawthorne was bound to achieve popularity and prestige. His works passed through edition after edition. Articles by the dozen of reminiscence and association—memoirs, impressions, the homes and haunts of Hawthorne—clustered into a sort of personality cult. At more serious levels, the great romancer became almost the first true challenge to American criticism. How ought he truly to be elucidated? He stood as an inspiration as well as a mine of suggestion for American aspirants to his art. And his work came to serve as a critical touchstone for the judgment of one’s contemporaries. Hawthorne’s became the first unquestionably major American fictional reputation.

The tale of Hawthorne’s editions between his death in 1864 and the close of the century is superbly told in Volume IV of Jacob Blanck’s monumental Bibliography of American Literature. James T. Fields, that publishing paragon of the age of steam, pushed hard on Hawthorne dead. “Little Pansie” appeared in three forms, and Twice-Told Tales in a “Blue and Gold” edition during 1864-65. Sophia Hawthorne’s notoriously edited version of the American Note-Books (1868) was followed by the English Note-Books (1870) and by Una Hawthorne’s edition of The French and Italian Note-Books (1871) in a market sequence carefully spaced. Then it was time for James R. Osgood, having succeeded Fields, to continue with family editions of Septimius Felton (1872), The Dolliver Romance and then Fanshawe and Other Pieces in 1876, and, scraping clean the barrel at last, Dr. Grimshawe’s Secret (1883).

Canny management of manuscript, and of magazine in relation to book publication, thus kept Hawthorne in some sense a current author for two decades after the last publication of
his personal lifetime. At length the moment arrived for the ultimate literary monument, the definitive set, edited by George Parsons Lathrop, Hawthorne's son-in-law, and published by Houghton Mifflin, successors in turn to Osgood: *The Complete Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, in twelve volumes, 1883.

If all this left no doubt of Hawthorne's prestige, the rest of his publishing history in this period leaves no doubt of his popularity—or his market value. Osgood made the point with sixteen Hawthorne issues in "Little Classic" editions, and Houghton Mifflin drove it home with "Modern Classics" and "American Classics for Schools." Hawthorne was "a classic," and he was to be reprinted again and again. Into the 1880's, as the Textual Introduction to the Centenary Edition makes clear, *The Scarlet Letter* was reprinted "with an impression or more almost every year."

About such a figure, given the traditions of nineteenth-century genius-worship and the exigencies of American cultural nationalism, there quickly clustered a literary personality cult. The wizard mysteries of Hawthorne's life, personality, and art lent themselves to ready exploitation. Some of this was mere gossip, some ordinary self-advertising of the Hawthorne-Knew-Me sort. Much of it consisted of association- and locale-mongering. Inevitably somebody wrote of "The Homes and Haunts of Hawthorne." A certain amount of this flow of recollection and memoir, on the other hand, constituted serious and relevant biography or biographical material. But the best of the genuine reminiscence was quickly concentrated in the major articles and, finally, books which had, within fifteen years after his death, fully certified Hawthorne as an authentic American genius.

The themes for discussion of Hawthorne during this period were largely set by "a nearly forgotten but brilliant Boston critic for whose judgment Hawthorne himself had the greatest respect." E. P. Whipple's "Nathaniel Hawthorne" was first
published in 1860 but reappeared in Character and Characteristic Men (1866). It was surrounded by a growing set of significant pieces, especially George W. Curtis' "The Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne," North American Review (October, 1864); Elizabeth Peabody's "The Genius of Nathaniel Hawthorne," Atlantic (September, 1868); Eugene Benson's "Poe and Hawthorne," Galaxy (December, 1868); Dorville Libby's "The Supernatural in Hawthorne," Overland (February, 1869); the Southern Review's "Writings of Nathaniel Hawthorne" (April, 1870), and solid chapters in James T. Fields's Yesterdays with Authors and the Englishman "H. A. Page's" Memoir of Nathaniel Hawthorne, both in 1872. Perhaps the final cachet was that imprinted on Hawthorne's name by a famous English author generously writing for an American magazine: Anthony Trollope, "The Genius of Nathaniel Hawthorne," North American Review (September, 1879).

In the perspective of these and dozens of slighter or more oblique estimates of Hawthorne, however, it seems clear that it was with the publication of three major works between 1876 and 1879 that Hawthorne became certified as an unchallengeable American genius. The first of these was the pioneering systematic examination and evaluation of the life and works determinedly entitled A Study of Hawthorne, by George Parsons Lathrop, in 1876. The second and most obvious was the almost reluctant concession of a brilliant critic doubly alienated through intellectual development and by self-conscious expatriation: Henry James's Hawthorne (1879). The one now least known but possibly, in its proper context, then most significant was E. C. Stedman's public ode, "Hawthorne" (1877).

Invited by the Phi Beta Kappa society of Harvard to deliver a thirty-minute poem, Stedman had devoutly contemplated "The College of the Gods" but felicitously settled upon "Hawthorne." As his authorized biography puts it, Stedman essayed to be
“our most popular American Poet of Occasion, the Universal Official Poet, as it were, upon whom a large neighborhood reliance was placed for an illuminating, artistic, sympathetic, even prophetic, expression of the dominant spirit or ideal.” The role was one in which Whitman and Lanier failed lamentably. And by invading Harvard for the purpose, Stedman deliberately put himself into competition with the local experts—Lowell and Holmes—in the practice of a wishful, and now little understood, Old American art form: democratic Pindarics, meant bardically to essentialize the highest truths of the national consciousness and so to crystallize them for the guidance and uplift of the nation—in this case, of the national taste.

Hawthorne he placed boldly beside Longfellow as equally a poet, though really the more prophetic of the two: “The one New-Englander!” “—New England’s best interpreter, her very own.” Nurtured amid wildling beauty but disciplined in solitude, “Two natures in him strove / Like day with night, his sunshine and his gloom.” For exercise of “his mysterious gift,” the world could well afford that “one” should “meditate aloof” and ignore “the time’s heroic quarrel.” For “none save he in our own time so laid / His summons on man’s spirit. . . .”

What if he brooded long
On Time and Fate,—the ominous progression
Of years that with Man’s retributions frown,—
The destinies which round his footsteps throng,—
Justice, that heeds not Mercy’s intercession,—
Crime, on its own head calling vengeance down,—
Deaf Chance and blind, that, like the mountain-slide
Puts out Youth’s heart of fire and all is dark!
What though the blemish which, in aught of earth,
The maker’s hand defied,
Was plain to him—the one evasive mark
Wherewith Death stamps us for his own at birth!
Ah, none the less we know
He felt the imperceptible fine thrill
With which the waves of being palpitate,
Whether in ecstasy of joy or woe,
And saw the strong divinity of Will
Bringing to halt the stolid tramp of Fate;
Nor from his work was ever absent quite
The presence which, o'ercast it as we may,
Things far beyond our reason can suggest:
There was a drifting light
In Donatello's cell,—a fitful ray
Of sunshine came to hapless Clifford's breast.

Flatulent as Stedman's verse now seems, his diary entry at concluding its composition is pathetic: "I think the poem is at my highwater mark—as sustained, analytic, and imaginative, a piece, as I shall ever write." But it was at least analytic. It alluded continuously to Hawthorne's work. It took positions on most of the basic issues of the Hawthorne criticism of the time—standing with Fields and Lathrop against Curtis' attack on Hawthorne's politics; with Whipple, Peabody, and Lathrop on the prophetic power of Hawthorne's imagination, the bardic quality, even, of his prose; with Japp and Lathrop against Whipple on the balance of Hawthorne's mind and character; with Lathrop on the historicity and profundity of Hawthorne's treatment of Puritanism, his evocation of the spiritual essence of New England. Always, in fact, Stedman stood with Lathrop. "Hawthorne" poeticized Lathrop's Study, accepting it as the definitive word. An epigone of the dying age of romantic idealism, Stedman felt authorized to set Hawthorne up on the plinth of his poesy by the romantic notion that beauty and genius, ideality and art, heroism, misty rhetoric, and windy euphony all went together.

"Hawthorne" foreshadowed the end of an age which faded
into agonizingly extended tenuities. With every allowance for taffy, it is astonishing to hear Dr. Holmes praise its "admirable contribution . . . to our poetical and our critical literature," or Aldrich class it with Arnold's "Thyrsis," or Julian Hawthorne call it "the most true and beautiful tribute yet made to Nathaniel Hawthorne's genius" by one of the two "best poets now living." Ideality, whether as decayed romanticism or as desperate neo-romanticism, was to be long a-dying. And the reputation of Nathaniel Hawthorne during the balance of the nineteenth century was to be continuously involved in the struggles to keep ideality alive.

II

Detailed examination of early Hawthorne criticism would show it engaged from work to work in a good deal of expostulation and reply over relatively minor issues. But the theme of permanent significance was the still current problem of the nature of reality in Hawthorne's work and mind. No question was more central to either the literary or the philosophic battles over ideality; and none was more central to the point of view or achievement of Henry James's Hawthorne. Speculation on the question had, of course, begun during the romancer's lifetime. It had become acute after Whipple, only apparently to be resolved by Lathrop. James simply shattered Lathrop's resolution. In doing so, he projected Hawthorne criticism decisively toward the "realism war" of the eighties and nineties.

Whipple, whose work has been called perhaps "the purest example extant of the Victorian development of Romantic organism," was a pioneering exponent of what we now think of as a Melvillean insight—that Hawthorne's distinctive vision revealed "the power of blackness." A decayed Christianity, thought Whipple, Puritanic Law with no compensating Grace, provided the key to Hawthorne's "peculiar mind," which
"touches the lowest depths of tragic woe and passion—so deep, indeed, that . . . Jonathan Edwards, turned romancer . . . could not have written a more terrific story of guilt and retribution than *The Scarlet Letter.*"¹³

Not so, said Elizabeth Peabody and Alexander Japp: Hawthorne's was a valid, if ecclesiastically liberated, Christianity. Lathrop carried the rebuttal to a genuine peak of Hawthorne appreciation—effectively blending his own intuition as to Hawthorne's mind with his own sense of Hawthorne's art. Hawthorne, he said, "had not the realistic tendency, as we usually understand that, but . . . the power to create a new species of fiction." And "the kind of romance that he has left us differs from all compositions previously so called." It is not the "romance" of Scudéry or Fielding, or the German Romantics. "It is not the romance of sentiment; nor that of incident, adventure, and character viewed under a worldly coloring: it has not the mystic and melodramatic bent belonging to Tieck and Fouqué."

There are, Lathrop holds, two things which "radically isolate" Hawthorne's art. These are, first, "its quality of revived belief":

Hawthorne . . . is a great believer . . . his belief goes out toward what is most beautiful and this he finds only in moral truth. . . . This unsparingly conscientious pursuit of the highest truth, this metaphysical instinct, found in conjunction with a varied and tender appreciation of all forms of human or other life, is what makes him so decidedly the representative of a wholly new order of novelists.

But is Hawthorne not usually thought a skeptic unbeliever? That arises, Lathrop replied, only from a superficial "appearance of doubt" and from "his fondness for illuminating fine but only half-perceptible traces of truth with the touch of superstition. . . . And out of this questioning belief and transmutation of
superstition into truth . . . proceeds also that quality of value and rarity and awe-enriched significance, with which he irradiates real life until it is sublimed to a delicate cloud-image of the eternal verities."

Lathrop's Hawthorne thus becomes a genius of vital ideality—a "fictionist" who "penetrates . . . far into individual consciences" and provides "a profoundly religious aid" for many readers. And thence, finally, Lathrop is prepared to issue a transcendent claim for his American genius:

Hawthorne's repose is the acme of motion; and though turning on an axis of conservatism, the radicalism of his mind is irresistible; he is one of the most powerful because most unsuspected revolutionists of the world. Therefore, not only is he an incalculable factor in private character, but in addition his unnoticed leverage for the thought of the age is prodigious. These great abilities, subsisting with a temper so modest and unaffected, and never unhumanized by the abstract enthusiasm for art, place him on a plane between Shakespeare and Goethe."

About the decision whether to undertake his Hawthorne for Macmillan's "English Men of Letters Series," Henry James may or may not actually have said "again and again" to Julian Hawthorne: "I don't want to do it. I'm not competent: and yet, if I don't, some Englishman will do it worse . . . . Your father was the greatest imaginative writer we had, and yet, I feel that his principle was wrong; there is no more powerfully and beautifully written book than The Scarlet Letter; and yet I believe the whole conception of it was wrong! Imagination is out of place; only the strictest realism can be right." But there can be no doubt that Hawthorne, and still more Lathrop's Hawthorne, presented the James of the late 1870's with personally painful, as well as intellectually formidable, challenges.

James's only sustained, book-length, and independent literary
study, his *Hawthorne* takes on a peculiar significance in the context of its own moment of Hawthorne criticism. If the first two chapters shed but a dim light on Hawthorne, they provide justly famous documentation of the then current state of the mind of Henry James. In one aspect as a work of criticism, James's book is shockingly bad; it is so mincingly self-conscious, so provincially deprecatory in its determination to maintain a "European" point of view, in its implied dismay at Lathrop's intolerable Yankee brag—Hawthorne on a plane between Shakespeare and Goethe, indeed! But in another aspect, James's is a great, free, original critical achievement.

Both the strengths and the weakness of James's *Hawthorne* spring from James's alienations. However necessary to his creative success, even survival, his sorely won expatriation, the need to justify himself to himself made James a blindly supercilious biographical and cultural critic in *Hawthorne*. But it was his intellectual alienation from his father's idealism, in brief, his own agnosticism and his commitment to the wholly this-worldly vision of the secularized continental realism then so bitterly controversial and "modern," which endowed James's view of Hawthorne's mind and art with piercing originality. With mocking ambiguity, James refuses to perceive the existence of Lathrop's unique romancer. Not believing in Puritanism, says James, Hawthorne simply did not believe. Not believing, he treated the matter of Puritanism "from the poetic and aesthetic point of view, the point of view of entertainment and irony." Metaphysically, Hawthorne was "a man of Fancy . . . with a kind of small ingenuity, a taste for conceits and analogies"—a mind easily prey to "allegory . . . one of the lighter exercises of the imagination," and a bore.16

"It cannot be too often repeated," James insists, "that Hawthorne was not a realist." His people "are all figures rather than characters—they are all pictures rather than persons."17 Haw-
thorne persistently deserted (James almost says "betrayed") his natively high sense of the real, of actuality. As he soars into moonlit tenuity, "we get too much out of reality and cease to feel beneath our feet the firm ground of an appeal to our own vision of the world—our observation." The result is that in the long run Hawthorne becomes to James "a beautiful, natural, original genius" of an almost pure and rather irresponsible artistry. His art is "original and exquisite" and unique: "No one has had just that vision of life, and no one has had a literary form that more successfully expressed his vision."

Yet in the end, James the realist could not take seriously the ideal white magic of the wizard hand. The exasperation of the rebel modernist and secularist shines through the deprecation, even the patronizing, of James's conclusion:

He was not a moralist, and he was not simply a poet. The moralists are weightier, denser, richer. . . . He combined in a singular degree the spontaneity of the imagination with a haunting care for moral problems. Man's conscience was his theme, but he saw it in the light of a creative fancy which added, out of its own substance, an interest, and, I may almost say, an importance.

Even from the sympathetic Howells, James's book brought the observation that for the Bostonian reaction to some of James's remarks he waited "with the patience and security of a spectator at an auto da fé, to see"; and a protest that fairness to Hawthorne demanded a recognition, deliberately withheld by James, of the traditional difference in aesthetic intention between the romance and the novel. To idealists and romanticists, however, attitudes like James's were infuriating. But there was no real point of leverage for their wrath until, quite innocently, Howells provided it in the famous essay, "Henry James, Jr.,” of 1882, which initiated the American phase of
the "realism war" and plunged Howells, James, and Hawthorne into the semantic middle of a bitter logomachy.

Howells' essay raised such a storm of obloquy, and, as effect led on to effect, delivered him into a warfare so sturdy that it is easy to forget how mild and obvious were the things he said: "It seems to me that an enlightened criticism will recognize in Mr. James's fiction a metaphysical genius working to aesthetic results. . . . The art of fiction has, in fact, become a finer art in our day than it was with Dickens and Thackeray. . . . The new school derives from Hawthorne and George Eliot . . . ; but it studies human nature much more in its wonted aspects, and finds its ethical and dramatic examples in the operation of lighter but not really less vital motives." It responds to "the realism of Daudet rather than . . . Zola"; and "this school, which is so largely of the future as well as the present, finds its chief exemplar in Mr. James," to whom "we cannot deny . . . a very great literary genius."  

Howells in the same piece wondered if James were not most truly a romancer: " . . . His best types have an ideal development . . . ," but "perhaps the romance is an outworn form, and would not lend itself to the reproduction of even the ideality of modern life." But, to the ultimate chagrin of James, one of the unfairnesses of the succeeding controversy was the fastening of the term "realist" or "modern realist" firmly to "Howells---and---James," as notoriety coupled them. Then there came the sort of confusion of terms inevitable to intellectual warfare. It was recalled that in philosophic tradition "realist" (the opposite of "nominalist") meant "idealist." It was pointed out that the "modern realist" was an agnostic if not a materialist. And it was said with scorn and venom that these "moderns" were prophets of a false, anti-spiritual, anti-ideal, perhaps vicious "reality."
Inevitably the Hawthorne of Lathrop was taken to represent the cause of the "true" realists; Hawthorne the skeptic, Hawthorne the disengaged artist, the Hawthorne of James, became the model of the modernists. Inevitably criticism of Hawthorne as well as the regular passing reference to Hawthorne, of the sort which constitutes the substance of genuine fame, became loaded with this distinction—and with its confusions. And, since the Lathropian Hawthorne was by far the more puissant figure and because such a figure was essential to the idealists, the idealist Hawthorne figured much more frequently. Certainly neither the Hawthorne criticism of the eighties and nineties in either England or the United States nor the general literature of criticism and controversy over fiction in the period can be read accurately without attention to these problems of tactics and terminology.

In general the idealists and agnostics, however customarily unfair to personalities, were correct in their understanding of the intellectual and aesthetic issues: the realist-agnostics were in revolt against the ideal; the romancer-idealists did look toward the substance of things hoped for, things not of this seeable world. The neo-romantics, who wanted romantic (or, as Howells distinguished it, "romanticistic") sensations divorced from romantic faith, constituted a third and mischievous force. "I hold with the poets and the idealists; not the idealizers, but those who have ideals . . . ," said Charles Eliot Norton in 1895. However, "an honest return . . . to the point of view of the early romanticists is now impossible," George Pellew had demonstrated in 1888. "Scott and Hawthorne and Thackeray," urged William Roscoe Thayer, tell us from on high, "The Real includes the Ideal, but the Real without the Ideal is as the body without life, a thing for anatomists to dissect." One neo-romantic commentator was so far carried away as to assert that George Washington Cable was superior to Hawthorne, for the latter is "psychologic rather than moral, an observer and analyzer
of moral problems, and coldly critical, not sympathetic. . . ." 28
But it was just in that probing intellect that the realist found
Hawthorne’s strength. Said Howells:

. . . None of Hawthorne's fables are without a profound and
distant reach into the recesses of nature and of being. He
came back from his researches with no solution of the question
. . . but the awful warning, 'Be true, be true,' which is the
burden of The Scarlet Letter. . . . It is not his fault that this
is not intelligence, that it knots the brow in sorer doubt rather
than shapes the lips to utterance of the things that can never
be said. 27

Such remarks represent the spectrum of responsibility toward
the mingled problems of belief and of Hawthorne’s mind and
art in this historical period. 28

III

By the 1890’s, these major (as well as a number of minor)
themes were firmly set as background for treatment of Haw­
thorne in periodical criticism, book- or chapter-length studies,
occasional poems, even the early texts and school-histories of
American literature. Particularly in regard to developments in
the international and historical novels and the literature of local
color, Hawthorne's example served steadily as an authorization
and incitement to writers and, inevitably, as a critical touch­
stone. Sampling of reviews, to say nothing of critical com­
mentary in every form, suggests that hundreds of testings of the
literature of the age by the Hawthornian touchstone might be
found. Indeed, it suggests that a minor critic might well have
doubted his respectability if he failed to cite Hawthorne whether
in praise of or attack against any writing in question. Howells,
concluding that Hawthorne had left “a legacy which in its
kind is the finest the race has received from any mind,” felt
moved to continue wryly, “As I have said, we are always finding
new Hawthorne’s, but the illusion soon wears away, and then
we perceive that they were not Hawthornes at all; that he had some peculiar difference from them, which, by-and-by, we shall no doubt consent must be his difference from all men evermore.”

A large but profitable study in itself would be that of the influence of Hawthorne on the American fiction writers of this extended generation. Everyone agreed that Hawthorne was a master stylist—an American master of English, or perhaps even a master of American English. Mark Twain, listing in 1879 the national treasures which entitled Americans to be indifferent to the British national contempt, climaxed his list with the comment: “Nobody writes a finer and purer English than Motley, Howells, Hawthorne and Holmes.” And, in a characteristic “whoop of joy” at the discovery of a major aesthetic experience, William James wrote to Henry on January 19, 1879, of his delight in reading The House of the Seven Gables:

I little expected so great a work. It’s like a great symphony, with no touch alterable without injury to the harmony. It made a deep impression on me and I thank heaven that Hawthorne was an American. It also tickled my national feeling not a little to notice the resemblance of Hawthorne’s style to yours and Howells’s. . . . That you and Howells with all the models in English literature to follow, should needs involuntarily have imitated (as it were) this American, seems to point to the existence of some real American mental quality.

Though Mark Twain found Hawthorne nevertheless one of the people whom it just tired him to death to try to read, authors so various as Bellamy and Cable, Jewett and Tourgee, James Lane Allen and the followers of F. Marion Crawford devoted themselves to revival of the Hawthornian romance. And, as we have seen, Hawthorne’s impact upon the realists was profound. Though a fragmentary literature on the subject exists, no one has yet truly elucidated the ways in which
James and Howells, as features of their very rebellion against "the Mage," repeatedly created—and in psychological, moral, and even mystical, as well as esthetic, developments—significant variations upon themes by Hawthorne.

After the triumph of a foolish neo-romanticism over the realists in their battle for the American public taste during the nineties, the serious idealists and the realists drew closer. Howells pointed out "the difference between the romanticistic and the romance, which is almost as great as that between the romantic and the realistic. Romance, as in Hawthorne, seeks the effect of reality in visionary conditions; romanticism, as in Dickens, tries for a visionary effect in actual conditions." And with the work of the great realistic internationals all turning toward the psychological, even the psychic, the Americans, in the same currents, found it the easier to be reconciled to Hawthorne—though Henry James's latest comment as a formal critic on Hawthorne was only less dry than the conclusions of his book. James now finds Hawthorne to be "... an aesthetic solitary. His beautiful, light imagination is the wing that on the autumn evening just brushes the dusky window. It was a faculty that gave him much more a terrible sense of human abysses than a desire rashly to sound them and rise to the surface with his report. On the surface—the surface of the soul and the edge of the tragedy—he preferred to remain. ... But of all cynics he was the brightest and kindest, and the subtleties he spun are mere silken threads for stringing polished beads. His collection of moral mysteries is the cabinet of a dilettante."

By the turn of the century, however, Hawthorne's mature reader would no longer feel old romantic chills at the touch of the wizard hand. Neither would he, to justify old revolts, feel it necessary to deny the paternity of certain aesthetic impulses. As represented by Lewis E. Gates, for instance, that reader would find nothing in Hawthorne to appal—beside the dc-
cadents, Hawthorne’s reputed morbidity would seem quaintly wholesome. Only the art and the ideas were enticing to Gates. “Hawthorne is a master spinner of beautiful webs,” Gates would write, “and the most rabid devotee of art for art’s sake cannot well refuse to enjoy the fineness and consistency of his designs, the continuity and firmness of his texture, and the richness and depth of his tinting. . . . But though Hawthorne dreams in terms of the ten commandments, . . . for some of us who still believe that life is greater than art, his dreams are all the more fascinating artistically because they are deeply, darkly, beautifully true.” Not just the date, but the textures of criticism were moving into a new era when Gates would say:

At present, Hawthorne is at a decided disadvantage, because, while remote enough to seem in triffles here and there archaic, he is yet not remote enough to escape contemporary standards or to be read with imaginative historical allowances and sympathy, as Richardson or Defoe is read. Hawthorne’s romances have the human quality and the artistic beauty that ensure survival; and in a generation or two, when the limitations of the Romantic ideal and the scope of Romantic methods have become historically clear in all men’s minds, Hawthorne’s novels will be read with an even surer sense than exists today of that beauty of form and style and that tender humanity which come from the individuality of their author, and with a more tolerant comprehension of the imperfectness of equipment and occasional faults of manner that were the result of his environment and age.35

Soon after the turn of the century, there would come a rich revival of Hawthorne scholarship and criticism with the centenary of his birth in 1904. But by then, figures like George Woodberry, William Peterfield Trent, and Paul Elmer More had come to maturity. Theirs would be a serious, Arnoldian view, heralding the neo-humanism of an imminent era and projecting Hawthorne toward the present century’s Age of Criticism.36