The literary reputation of Nathaniel Hawthorne's only son, Julian, led some critics in his own day to compare him favorably with George Eliot, Henry James, and William Dean Howells, as well as his father. This was a mistake, but time has repaired it—indeed, has savagely reversed the scales.

Julian, the young pretender to the glorious family name, certainly outwrote his somewhat sluggish father quantitatively: he was the author of no less than twenty-six long and short novels, over sixty short stories, almost a hundred essays, and several lengthy works of biography and autobiography. Yet who today remembers a single one of his books—unless it be the still well-regarded *Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife*, the reverential biography? The primary reason for Julian Hawthorne's decline ought to be stated frankly at the outset: in an age of giants like Clemens and James—to speak only of his American contemporaries—Hawthorne was a pygmy. He was a fascinating but shallow man, and his works reflect more of the shallowness than of the fascination. "No good novel," James wisely remarks, "will ever proceed from a superficial mind." Yet, surprisingly, there are quite genuine if rare treasures scattered here and there in the works of the younger Hawthorne, treasures that ought to be recovered unapologetically.

There are many other reasons for the dusty shroud on Hawthorne's reputation, some of them instructive as examples of critical illogic and of shifting fashions in literary taste. First, certain extraliterary features had entered into the criticism of his fiction before the publication of his last novels in 1896. It is almost impossible to find an account of Hawthorne's work that
does not seek to draw an essentially irrelevant evaluative comparison between the creations of father and son. In this form, perhaps, did the old Hathorne curse descend yet another generation. According to Lionel Stevenson, the son "was either condemned out of hand, on the assumption that he was trying to capitalize his relationship, or else he was measured solely by the criterion of his father's work. Good qualities were praised as survivals of the paternal genius, and anything which the critics disliked was branded as a pathetic lapse from the Hawthorne tradition."¹ As Julian Hawthorne said ironically of this extrinsic criticism: "A disquisition upon the mantle of Nathaniel Hawthorne, and an analysis of the differences and similarities between him and his successor, generally fill so much of a notice as to enable the reviewer to dismiss the book itself very briefly."²

There were other reasons for the hostile reactions of some critics. Hawthorne engaged in several noisy literary quarrels: with the New York Sunday Times, with fellow members of the Authors Club, with his brother-in-law George Parsons Lathrop, and with James Russell Lowell—among others. These quarrels, considered together with Hawthorne's openly professed commercialism and his exploitation of sensual themes, alienated him from the affections of the genteel critics. They were further disaffected by his antididactic approach to literature, for he believed that art, far from embodying a conscious moral purpose, should be itself the "test of morality."³ He made some enemies by attacking the position of Howells and such local-color writers as Bret Harte with respect to a national literature; he urged writers to seek an American point of view, not necessarily American materials.⁴ Finally, his spirited defense of imagination and ideality in fiction, extending to the use of supernatural phenomena, allied him with an outdated school.

After 1896, when Julian Hawthorne turned from the writing of fiction to an exclusively journalistic career, he was rarely again treated seriously as an imaginative writer. In 1901, for example, he was labeled by Oscar Adams as "a novelist who has
inherited his father's originality, but whose work is often careless and hasty in construction and of ephemeral interest only."  
Fred L. Pattee, the last literary historian to discuss Hawthorne's work, wrote his comment in 1917, four years after the former novelist had been sent to Atlanta Penitentiary for engaging in a Canadian mining-stock fraud, and perhaps some features of his judgment, like those of earlier critics, are extra-literary. "In his earlier days," said Pattee, "he devoted himself to themes worthy of the Hawthorne name and treated them in what fairly may be called the Hawthorne manner. But the man lacked seriousness, conscience, depth of life, knowledge of the human heart. After a short period of worthy endeavor he turned to the sensational and the trivial, and became a yellow journalist." The trite comparison with the elder Hawthorne (like Oscar Adams's), the absence of literary analysis of the writer's admittedly "worthy endeavor," the low blow aimed at the lack of "conscience," all mark Pattee's statement as critically valueless.

The year of Hawthorne's eighty-fifth birthday celebration, 1931, saw a very minor resurgence of interest in his work, which had been passed over in silence by every American literary chronicler. Professor Stevenson, in a brief article rather extravagantly naming Julian Hawthorne "Dean of American Letters," sought to revive his reputation as a writer of fiction. He placed Hawthorne outside the two main camps of the late nineteenth century—Clemens and Harte on the one hand, and Howells and James on the other. "His literary ability," Stevenson declared, "was obviously far in advance of Fawcett and Roe and their tribe, and yet he used melodramatic episodes which appealed to their following. He seemed to know both England and the United States thoroughly, and much of continental Europe as well, and yet he showed none of the superiority of the expatriate. He avoided the current literary prejudices with bland tolerance." Stevenson believed that Hawthorne's literary squabbles, his forcible opinions, the supposed immorality of his novels, his commercialism, and his very versatility, all com-
bined to obscure the excellence of his fiction. The critic emphasized the pervasive strain of Gothic romanticism in his work, but stressed that the Gothic elements were introduced with a new scientific vocabulary. He found a "primitive vigor" in Hawthorne's novels, positive ideas, and an "indefinable guilelessness."  

Thirteen years later, Professor Harold P. Miller assessed Julian Hawthorne's life and career for the Dictionary of American Biography. His early stories, Miller wrote, showed the unmistakable influence of the elder Hawthorne, extending even to the duplication of scenes and proper names. "Hawthorne's attitude toward his own writing was frankly commercial," declared the biographer. "He wrote rapidly, revised little, lost interest in his novels before he completed them, and had few illusions regarding their worth. Partial to stories of the occult and of psychological abnormality, he lacked his father's ability to establish and sustain the tone or atmosphere which they demanded." Miller echoes Stevenson's view that Julian Hawthorne's fiction blended supernatural and realistic elements, and it is on this basis that he believes it to have little more than historical value. The biographer's encomiums are reserved for the son's treatments of his father's life and work. Citing Charles F. Richardson's judgment (in 1888) of Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife as "the best biography written in America," Miller declares that Julian Hawthorne, in analyzing the contributions of the notebooks to the fiction of Nathaniel Hawthorne, in relating this fiction to the environment in which it took shape, and in insisting upon the cheerfulness and sanity of a temperament often regarded as morbid, has appreciably influenced modern interpretations of the father.

The last important critical essay on Julian Hawthorne appeared in 1957, when Professor George Knox traced the novelist's career sympathetically, reviewed his critical opinions, and noted, as had Stevenson, that "trying scientifically to explain the fantastic and the bizarre, he constructed gargoyles." Basing his article largely on Hawthorne's contributions to the
Pasadena Star-News in the years 1923–34, Knox found Hawthorne to be under the guidance of an “inspirational esthetic,” and stressed that his main trouble as an artist was that he felt insincere when he had to contrive what at the moment of writing he did not deeply feel. Knox notes that in his later days, Hawthorne was able to extend his aesthetic into a political dimension, seeing art as one of the great social functions of mankind and the binding force in socialist brotherhood. In his last years in California, Knox concludes, “he carried on steadily the fight for high standards in American literature, acidly attacking the easy biographers, translators who posed as original artists, and the hucksters who he felt were producing most twentieth century literature.”

Other commentators on Julian Hawthorne have been about as scarce as readers. Charles E. Honce’s A Julian Hawthorne Collection (1939) expands the bibliography in P. K. Foley’s American Authors on the basis of his own collection and correspondence with the author before 1934. Vernon Loggins’s occasionally inaccurate The Hawthornes (1951) traces Hawthorne’s life briefly and scathingly, on the whole dismissing him in favor of glorifying his sister Rose Hawthorne Lathrop, Mother Alphonsa, the most saintly descendant of Nathaniel; and the same may be said of the major biography of Rose, A Fire Was Lighted (1948), by Theodore Maynard. Carl J. Weber and George Knox have written separate, entertaining accounts of the Lowell-Hawthorne feud of 1886, and Professor Knox has added an analysis of the Hawthorne-James relationship and a study of the reception in Germany of Hawthorne’s Saxon Studies. The present writer has published studies on the Julian Hawthorne Collection at Yale University, on Hawthorne’s use of his Aunt Ebe’s recollections for his major biography, and on a literary quarrel of the 1880’s centering upon the admission of Will Carleton to the Authors Club. As Professor Stevenson noted over thirty years ago, despite Julian Hawthorne’s considerable and partly merited success in his own day, a powerful battery of forces, not the least of which was the
sway of literary fashion, has unconsciously conspired to efface his contribution to American letters.

Julian Hawthorne's long literary career was marked by an extraordinary fecundity and versatility that served, in his lifetime, to obscure his attempts to embody an integrated interpretation of the Concord tradition in his fiction, biography, and criticism. Chief among the great figures of this tradition, and the one by whose standards Julian Hawthorne continuously measured himself, was the writer's father, Nathaniel Hawthorne. During his early career Julian Hawthorne learned to live under the shadow of his father and developed those curiously mixed ideas of veneration for the paternal name and occasional exploitation of it for venal reasons that were to mark his life to the end. It is in the context of the parental accomplishments that one must understand what Julian Hawthorne did and what he was, and not—at least, not primarily—in the context of contemporaneous literary fashion, for Hawthorne was always relatively uninvolved as an artist (though not as a critic or as a man) in the literary crosscurrents of his day.

This critical biography does not seek to resurrect Julian Hawthorne's reputation to that equality with his 'rivals' Henry James and William Dean Howells that the critic John Nichol advocated over eighty years ago, nor to shut its eyes to the hackwork and commercialism that sapped the vitality of Hawthorne's imagination. Nor does it attempt to evaluate the younger Hawthorne's work by the touchstone of the elder Hawthorne's literary accomplishment. It does not, again, yield to the temptation (common to many biographies) to trace dubious hereditary characteristics from the parents to the child. Nor does it presume to be able to show that perfectly neat but almost always fallacious correspondence between the events of a writer's life and the themes of his writings that is so attractive to innocent readers.

So much for negative considerations. On the other hand, I hope to be able to demonstrate that the life and career of Julian
Hawthorne can best be understood in the context of the parental image, by which I mean Nathaniel Hawthorne as man, as father, as writer, as social critic, and as literary theoretician. The image—which persisted from young Hawthorne’s boyhood in Concord to his senescence in Pasadena, and which, indeed, no one allowed him for a moment to forget—did not daunt Julian Hawthorne. He did not deliberately court the obscurity into which he has fallen. On the whole the parental image strengthened rather than demoralized his life and his art. Julian Hawthorne faced up to his heritage with a muscular intellectual vigor perhaps uncommon in those born to a famous name.

Three complementary directions are followed in this book. I have told—for the first time and in some detail—the story of Julian Hawthorne’s often colorful life, demonstrating how that life was shaped by the formative years in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s household, by public reaction to the younger Hawthorne’s prosecution of an active literary career, and by Julian’s own peculiar temperament. Second, I have analyzed—selectively—the writings of Julian Hawthorne, from his earliest short stories to his last volumes of reminiscences, and traced his literary techniques, his critical viewpoints, his thematic preoccupations, and his social philosophy to his interpretation of the craftsmanship and theories of Nathaniel Hawthorne. Lest it be inferred that the younger Hawthorne’s life and career have been viewed mechanically as a simple reflex to the parental image, I hasten to add that the life had of necessity to be considered as shaped by such forces as the economic demands of Hawthorne’s large family and the thought as also nurtured by such secondary influences as Emerson and Swedenborg. Finally, I have sought to identify those writings from Julian Hawthorne’s enormous output (chronicled in the Bibliography) that remain worthy of serious attention.

Although the whole of this study will perform these tasks, it may be useful at this point to sketch the main outlines of my argument; the text itself will offer ample documentation. In his famous preface to The House of the Seven Gables, Nathaniel
Hawthorne had distinguished carefully between the Novel and the Romance: the former, he declared, aims "at a very minute fidelity, not merely to the possible, but to the probable and ordinary course of man's experience," whereas the latter, though it "sins unpardonably so far as it may swerve aside from the truth of the human heart, has fairly a right to present that truth under circumstances, to a great extent, of the writer's own choosing or creation."

This distinction forms one of the bases for Julian Hawthorne's own theory of fiction, and his imaginative work evidences a split, at first clear but later less distinct, between these two modes. Hawthorne's realistic novels are the progeny of his first major work, *Bressant* (1873), and his romances descend from the earliest tales and from *Idolatry* (1874); this distinction has been adopted as a useful organizing principle. In writing his romances, Julian Hawthorne adopted from his father's stories not only particular settings, themes, and even characters, but also the elder Hawthorne's predilection for the more sensational elements of an already moribund Gothic romanticism. Indeed, the younger Hawthorne went beyond his father in asserting not merely the necessity of mingling "the Marvellous" as a "slight, delicate, and evanescent flavor" in his romances but the salutary effects upon literary technique of overtly fanciful and supernatural materials. Julian Hawthorne's often asserted belief in spiritual reality, which undoubtedly sprang, at least in part, from his reading of Emerson, informs not only the sincerity of his use of the marvelous but the power of his critical theories on imagination and the nature of art. The aim of fiction, he believed, was to achieve the "loftier reality" through "spiritual intuition"; he thus deplored such contemporaneous tendencies as the ascendency of impersonal science, the rise of agnosticism, and "the photographic method of novel-writing." In defending the principles of ideality in fiction and poetry, Hawthorne was defending not only his own practice but the Hawthorne tradition in literature, as he understood it.
From the romances and tales of his father, Julian Hawthorne adopted also several important thematic concerns. The first, and more obvious, of these themes was the hereditary transmission of sin through several generations and a final expiation by the last descendant of the line. In the novel *Garth*, for example, this theme and its setting in an ancestral home bear marked resemblances to the elder Hawthorne's treatment in *The House of the Seven Gables*. A second adopted theme is the primacy of love over selfish intellect. Dominated by their towering ambition and their pride and alienated from the communion of their fellow human beings, such heroes as Bressant, Balder Helwyse, Sebastian Strome, and Warren Bell painfully achieve a state of grace through the growth of their capacity to love. However, their destinies, it should be noted, are not so tragic as those of Nathaniel Hawthorne's Ethan Brand, Aylmer, and Hollingsworth. Julian utilized other themes for which he is scarcely or not at all indebted to his father. He developed a series of contrasts, for example, between spiritual and carnal love; and he painted glowingly the virtues of innocent country life as opposed to the evils of the metropolis. A projection of his personal dilemma may be discerned in the recurring theme of the disparity in ideals and accomplishments between a father and his son. Further, Hawthorne's psychological doubts concerning his own pretensions to the Hawthorne name and eminence seem to be projected into at least five of his novels—ranging from his earliest to his last—in which we detect the "changeling" motif of a child living out his life under false pretenses and finding a measure of happiness only as he discovers and secures his identity.

Nathaniel Hawthorne's haphazard involvement in socialism was also to strike a dominant chord fifty years later in the life and writings of his son. The influence of his father's example and an honest application of the doctrine of love and brotherhood that he promulgated in his fiction were among the forces that led Julian to embrace the socialist ideal of government and
economy. He was led in this direction also by his devotion to personal and aesthetic liberty, ideals that he felt could best be served in a socialistic community.

The devotion to his father's life and literary achievement that he had manifested in his fiction, criticism, and social views by the flattery of imitation and adaptation received its most obvious public embodiment in the long series of books and articles that Julian Hawthorne wrote about his father. These included not only an edition of Nathaniel Hawthorne's works, the editing of two of his unfinished romances, and various critical sketches but an imposing biographical work, *Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife* (1884), which critics at the time compared favorably with Boswell's *Life of Johnson* and which is still regarded as indispensable for a full understanding of the elder Hawthorne's career. Although the later biographical works, which gradually came to adopt autobiographical elements, are more frivolous and gossipy, the total impression gathered from Julian Hawthorne's studies of his father is of a student who, through his love and his intelligence, has understood the life and art of a great man.

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M. B.

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Hawthorne’s Son