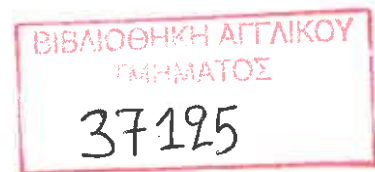THE CAMBRIDGE
COMPANION TO

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

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55. Quoted in McAleer, *Ralph Waldo Emerson*, p. 420.
56. For an overview of Hawthorne's attitudes toward the slavery controversy, see Jean Fagan Yellin, "Hawthorne and the Slavery Question," in *A Historical Guide to Nathaniel Hawthorne*, pp. 135–64.
57. Richard Brodhead, "Hawthorne and the Fate of Politics," *Essays in Literature* 11 (Spring 1984): 98.
58. *New York Daily Tribune*, quoted in Ralph L. Rusk, *The Life of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1949), p. 402.
59. Richard H. Brodhead, *The School of Hawthorne* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 79.
60. Nina Baym makes this point in her *The Shape of Hawthorne's Career* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1976), p. 252.
61. Quoted in McAleer, *Ralph Waldo Emerson*, p. 420.

2

JOEL PFISTER

Hawthorne as cultural theorist

Over the past couple of decades, many scholars have reread American authors and their literature as complicit carriers of capitalist, imperialist, nationalist, class, gender, ethnoracial, and sexual ideologies. This critical emphasis on literature's ideological relations to the reproduction of social contradictions has placed literary studies in a more provocative dialogue with cultural theory. In developing this dialogue, it is equally important to recognize that American authors have from the get-go been among America's most complex, self-reflexive, daring, and artful cultural theorists. When critics grant many of these authors and their fictions the credit they deserve, it is easier to see that their creative insights contribute much to modern understandings of the workings – and political possibilities – of culture.

I owe a special debt to Nathaniel Hawthorne for inspiring me to think about such matters, for my earliest readings of his work led me to value American literature as a theoretical resource.[1] In his "Custom House" preface to *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) Hawthorne punned on "customs" when he portrayed himself as a Surveyor of Customs. The term describes not only the government post he held in the Salem Custom House, but also a key aspect of his role as a writer who critically surveyed his culture's customs, habits of seeing and feeling, and patterns of making significance. Hawthorne learned – and unlearned – much through his narratives, allegories, and anti-allegories of culture, contradiction, and meaning production. To clarify my appreciation of Hawthorne's power as a cultural theorist, I offer here some brief analyses of his fictions. What I consider, however, is partial – by no means the whole story, or stories.

Social critic and cultural theorist

Hawthorne's fiction often addressed issues, themes, contradictions, and perspectives taken up by mid nineteenth-century social critics. In 1843 and 1844

alone his tales and sketches featured critical and sometimes satirical views of the demon of machinery, the ideology of technology-as-progress, destructive modes of labor, the exploitation of seamstresses in urban sweatshops, growing class division in cities, and money-mad American millionaires.[2] Even Hawthorne's retelling of Greek myths in *A Wonder-Book for Girls and Boys* (1851) engages in social criticism. "The Golden Touch," for instance, hints that nineteenth-century capitalist "love" and "value" can destroy rather than enrich family life: Midas turns to gold a daughter whom – he realizes too late – he loves much more than gold. The Hawthorne who was fired as Surveyor of Customs knew mid nineteenth-century New England not so much as the Puritans' "howling wilderness" that Young Goodman Brown allegorized as ruled by devils, but as the howling marketplace.[3] "In this republican country, amid the fluctuating waves of our social life," the narrator of *The House of Seven Gables* (1852) muses, "someone is always at the drowning point" (II: 38). Hawthorne was capable of being sexist, anti-Semitic, racist, and insufferably middle class – a purveyor of customs. More important, he had an admirable self-critical inclination to explore beyond his own ostensible ideological preferences. In writing fiction that shook up his own ideological tendencies, his social criticism often developed analytically as cultural theory.

Hawthorne's "Main-street" (1849), for example, gives a selective chronicle of Main Street from the era of Native-occupied "Salem" to the witch-hunts of the 1690s. This history is performed as a puppet show. The puppeteer-historian exhumes "Indians," dissenters, religious martyrs, and others ideologically immured beneath Main Street in his effort to restore historical memory. Pre-invasion Main Street is barely a path: "The white man's axe has never smitten a single tree; his footstep has never crumpled a single one of the withered leaves, which all the autumns since the flood have been harvesting beneath" (XI: 50). The puppeteer imagines how Squaw Sachem and her husband Wappacowet, a necromancer, would be horrified if they

could see, as in a dream, the stone front of the stately hall, which [in the American future] will cast its shadow over this very spot; if he could be aware that the future edifice will contain a noble Museum, where, among countless curiosities of earth and sea, a few Indian arrowheads shall be treasured up as memories of a vanished race! (XI: 51)

As one twentieth-century critic wrote: "The Anglo-Saxon smashes the culture of any primitive people that gets in his way, and then, with loving care, places the pieces in a museum."[4] But in Hawthorne's "museum" the reader is encouraged to remember the smashing. Later the puppeteer relates how in the

late seventeeth century the grandson of Squaw Sachem and Wappacowet sells his beaver skins in Salem only to obtain money to get drunk. The Christian marketplace lays "pavements" – like mendacious history books – "over the red man's grave" (XI: 55).

The Puritans' "Anglo-Saxon energy" (XI: 57) is a cocksure cultural and economic energy that uses religion as an imperialist alibi to persecute Natives and dissenters. It is like a collective version of the energy that drives Hawthorne's monomaniacs who chillingly insist: *it needs be done.* Hawthorne investigates how culture – made real through the built environment, categories of (racial, gender, class, religious) difference, and habits – can accustom its members to a set range of ways of producing and organizing life. Cultural structures – colonizing structures – take shape inside as well as outside minds and bodies. Puritan colonizers erect their buildings, and impose their customs, values, and ways of identifying in the hope of making it all seem like the only imaginable legitimate authority and reality. Dissenters are imprisoned, pilloried, burdened with halters, and whipped. The puppeteer even dramatizes the public whipping of a bare-breasted Quaker, Ann Coleman. Hawthorne, perhaps putting his own "soul" into every stroke of his pen, indicts his ancestor's perverse "spirit":

A strong-armed fellow is that constable; and each time that he flourishes his lash in the air, you see a frown wrinkling and twisting his brow, and, at the same instant, a smile upon his lips. He loves his business, faithful officer that he is, and puts his soul into every stroke, zealous to fulfil the injunction of Major Hathorne's warrant, in the spirit and to the letter. (XI: 70)

In these ways Hawthorne uses fiction and history to unveil how certain fabrications of reality and "souls" were struggled over and made dominant – fabrications that did not always exist and that by implication can be changed. By the late seventeenth century the second-generation Puritans simply assumed that their Main Street – their familiar form of the Christian marketplace – had been "one of the perdurable things of our mortal state" (XI: 71). In 1940 Walter Benjamin, a great cultural theorist associated with the Frankfurt School, contemplated the largely unwritten history of the "anonymous forced labor" that has made so much wealth, culture, and systemic inequality possible, and asserted: "There has never been a document of culture which was not at one and the same time a document of barbarism."[5] Hawthorne, like Benjamin, wanted his readers to consider how barbarism took the form of "culture" – not only as cultural "documents," but as structures of daily life, customs, premises. His fiction attempts to see

through, below, and beyond (some of) the cultural facades of Main Street America.

The industrial reorganization of intimacy

Hawthorne's "Fire Worship" (1843) is more than just a charming sketch about the increasing popularity of parlor stoves. Its analysis of the industrial transformation of domestic intimacy – like "Main-street" – is historically materialist in its explanation of the social making of consciousness.[6] The cast-iron stove, according to the narrator, has ignited a "great revolution in social and domestic life" (x: 138). It makes obsolete the open hearth, which is romanticized nostalgically as a symbol of the well-ordered, pre-industrial community wherein the warmth of faith and loyalty humanized public and private bonds: "While a man was true to his fireside, so long would he be true to country and law, to the God whom his father worshipped, to the wife of his youth, and to all things else which instinct or religion has taught us to consider sacred" (x: 140). The stove facilitates and symbolizes industrial America's colonization of the home.

Hawthorne's narrator personifies the stove's fire as an exploited laborer in iron confinement – reminiscent of the proletarians in New England's proliferating factories. "Alas! blindly inhospitable, grudging the food that kept him [fire] cheery and mercurial, we have thrust him into an iron prison, and compel him to smoulder away his life on a daily pittance which once would have been too scanty for breakfast!" (x: 139). The fire that propels the "steamboat" and "rail-car" languishes even at home as an air-tight "prisoner of his cage" (x: 139–40). While hearths frame visions of transcendence, stoves entomb the damned. "Voices talking almost articulately within the hollow chest of iron . . . my fire wood must have grown in that infernal forest of lamentable trees, which breathed their complaints to Dante." These gothic "sighs, burdened with unutterable grief" seemingly endanger the sentimental middle-class home: "We tremble, lest he should break forth amongst us" (x: 144). Here Hawthorne may have alluded to middle-class anxieties about widespread labor unrest and the formation of workers' unions in the late 1830s.

Hawthorne envisions the stove as an industrial agent of what can be termed "selfing." All selves are to some extent products of or responses to dominant material, cultural, and ideological processes of selfing.[7] The stove, the narrator suggests, helps produce a new form of air-tight domestic selfing characterized by mutual emotional privatization. "Domestic life, if it may still be termed domestic, will seek its separate corners, and never gather itself into groups." Air-tight intercourse will "contract the air of debate" (xi: 146).

Nonetheless, the narrator confesses that he has acquired several stoves – for their efficiency and economy.

"Fire Worship" contributes to what historian Philippe Ariès in 1960 nominated "the history of feelings." In the mid nineteenth century, Ariès argues, an "emotional revolution" accompanied the Industrial Revolution.[8] Hawthorne's sketch, like Ariès's history, situates industrial capitalism and homelife, factories and affections, the need for efficiency and sentiment, in the same analytical and explanatory framework, and imaginatively contributes to the theorizing and historicizing of material, cultural, and ideological machineries of selfing. The historical materialism of "Main-street" and "Fire Worship" affirms Antonio Gramsci's belief that the "starting point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is 'knowing thyself' as a product of the historical process to date which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory."[9]

Cultural innerselfing

Hawthorne excelled as a cultural theorist of subjectivity formation. He conceptualized subjectivity in at least two ways that could be at odds. First, as in "Main-street" and "Fire Worship," he took account of the historical, material, and cultural "selfing" of the self. A clear example of Hawthorne's relational approach to the social selfing of selves is evident in Zenobia's remark about her more feminized half-sister Priscilla in *The Blithedale Romance* (1852): "She is the type of womanhood such as man has spent centuries in making" (III: 122). Zenobia perceives "womanhood" not as something natural or given upon which culture operates, but as an ideological invention of patriarchal culture that purveys an illusion of naturalness or psychological givenness. Hawthorne frequently foregrounded the idea that subjectivity is socially fabricated, not simply expressed.

Second, in other instances Hawthorne posited subjectivity as an expression of an "inner" *psychological self*. In *The Scarlet Letter* the agitated Dimmesdale emerges from his forest liaison with Hester usurped by his transgressive "inner man." Once his "man" is unrepressed, Dimmesdale's "interior kingdom" experiences "a total change of dynasty and moral code." The adulterous minister is seemingly overtaken by "a profounder self" than the self which he had felt constrained to present to the public. He desires to do "wicked thing[s]" that "would be at once involuntary and intentional, in spite of himself" (I: 217). In such passages Hawthorne reads subjectivity more categorically than relationally. The emphasis is more on the psychological force – rather than the cultural making – of Dimmesdale's "inner man."

Since the mid nineteenth century, middle-class readers have celebrated this second Hawthornian approach to subjectivity. In his 1851 review of Hawthorne, Henry Tuckerman gushed: "What the scientific use of lenses – the telescope and the microscope – does for us in relation to the external universe, the psychological writer achieves in regard to our own nature." Henry James lauded Hawthorne's "anatomizing" as "the deeper psychology." Numerous twentieth-century critics have compared Hawthorne and Sigmund Freud to suggest that it is Hawthorne's proto-psychoanalytic wisdom that makes his fiction "deep."[10]

While one might well value the psychological insights celebrated by these earlier critics, what may seem like Hawthorne's proto-psychoanalytic orientation should not be understood mainly as Yankee insight into a universal psychological self. Instead, that psychological discourse itself must be grasped as a historical, cultural, and ideological development integral to the production of class identity – an identity generally thought of as middle-class individuality. Hawthorne, along with some other antebellum psychological and sentimental authors, advice book writers, and book reviewers, was engaged in inventing a nascent – often compensatory – pop psychology for the middle class. This is a key ideological trend in the "emotional revolution" that was intertwined with the Industrial Revolution. This complex antebellum literature of the "emotional revolution," understood historically, made Freud's later psychoanalytic imaginings of the self and of the family predictable, in the sense that these fictions were, decades earlier, encoding and narrating – that is, helping to remake – the individual and the family *as* fundamentally psychological. Thus, Freud does not "explain" Hawthorne. Rather, nineteenth-century middle-class fiction like Hawthorne's, situated historically, helps to "explain" (the later emergence of) Freud and the popularity of psychoanalysis among the American bourgeoisie.

Hawthorne's two approaches to subjectivity – as product of cultural selfing or as psychological essence – have different political implications. His pop psychological fiction often conceived of "liberation" in highly individualized and socially narrow terms as the resistance of a desiring self to a culture reductively defined as systems of taboo (later articulated as the Freudian notion of culture-as-repression).[11] Hence Dimmesdale is tempted to mock Puritan taboos after his forest walk on the wild side with Hester. When Hawthorne's fictions advance more relational understandings of subjectivity, the struggle for liberation does not depend on giving expression to a middle-class inner self that society represses; it seems to rely more on identifying how the cultural selfing of subjectivity (usually labeled "individuality") is constituted by (transformable) social forces.

Of course, Hawthorne's two approaches to representing subjectivity sometimes appear in the same fiction. In "Main-street," Hawthorne criticizes an "American" ideological self-perception shaped by structures – symbolized by Main Street's buildings and pavements – that promoted an historical amnesia which effaced the contradictions of Puritan imperialism. But Hawthorne's critique of the Puritans also deploys a repressed "inner man" model – note Sheriff Hathorne's constable's "smile" as he whips. This Puritan "inner man" makes an appearance in other tales, such as "Endicott and the Red Cross" (1838) and "The May-Pole of Merry Mount" (1836). Hawthorne uses these "inner men" to take psychosexual revenge on his Puritan forefathers by hinting that they projected impulses they denied in themselves onto others and then from these same tabooed impulses received substitutive satisfactions when persecuting the others. Consequently, the Puritans who persecute the pagan merrymounters for frolicking around the phallic maypole gain similar – though displaced and disguised – satisfactions from lacerating them on their erect whipping post.

If it can be contended that the pop psychological slant of Hawthorne's fiction helped pave the way for a modern therapeutic narrowing of cultural theory (liberation defined as an individualized and psychologized battle against cultural repression and taboo), it can also be argued that Hawthorne's more social perceptions of how cultural selfing works expand our theoretical understanding of cultural and literary headmaking, heartmaking, and soulmaking. By engaging in the psychological and sentimental selfing of the middle class *and* by blowing the whistle on these ideological processes of class and gender selfing, Hawthorne gained remarkable insight into – and into his own participation in – the cultural emergence of American literature as a subjectivity industry. When the three (understudied) sketches to which I shall now turn are considered as a thematic cluster, it will be easier for me to suggest what was at stake in Hawthorne's contributions to and critiques of cultural and literary systems of what I will call "innerselfing."

In "A Book of Autographs" (1844) Hawthorne's narrator analyzes the handwriting of several of America's founding fathers as marks of character. (Early in the next century Freud – who inherited this romantic search for clues to "innerness" – would assign deep significance to psychopathological "parapraxes" such as slips of the tongue.)[12] Hawthorne's mid nineteenth-century interest in signs that might disclose the inner self was by no means unique, for rapid social, economic, and demographic change made the quest for precision in detecting motives and character seem exigent. Thus phrenologists examined bumps on the head and physiognomists studied facial structure to decipher supposedly inborn character traits. Hawthorne, though intrigued by graphology, lampooned both phrenology and physiognomy. He

may have been familiar with articles on handwriting featured in *Godey's Lady's Book* in the 1830s and 1840s. The authors analyzed the signatures of famous historical women, like Queen Elizabeth, in an attempt to gauge their femininity.[13] Hawthorne also may have read Edgar Allan Poe's three essays on autography (1836, 1841, 1842), which scrutinized the script of contemporary literati. Poe denounced the literary hacks he detested as having "clerky" writing. Because the systematized – or clerky "hand" – frustrated his attempt to measure depth of character, he claimed that such authors lacked individuality. Yet in his 1841 preface Poe acknowledged that his analyses were influenced more by his literary taste than his belief in handwriting as an index of character – he assigned psychological and literary capital only to authors he liked.[14]

Hawthorne's narrator, like the *Godey's* authors and Poe, endeavors to unmask the private self behind the public face – to glimpse in slips of the hand the unedited "deep" psychological individual that presumably drives the historical self. "An erasure, even a blot, a casual irregularity of hand, and all such imperfections of mechanical execution, bring us closer to the writer, and perhaps convey some of those subtle intimations for which language has no shape" (XI: 360). George Washington's gentlemanly, controlled hand denies the narrator access: it is too mechanical, too civil. His "command of hand" betrays "no physical symptom . . . of varying mood, of jets of emotion" (XI: 363). The narrator encodes this as a deficiency of individuality. "Is it, that his great nature . . . could not individualize itself in brotherhood to an individual?" (XI: 364). Generally, the narrator seems to devalue eighteenth-century personal life for its emphasis on ceremony, courtesy, civility, and formality. Rather than assign significance to Washington's achievement, persistence, and skill, the narrator ascribes interest to warmth, intimacy, sentiment, and psychological turmoil. Hawthorne is moving toward transforming the middle-class sentimental reader into a psychological reader. He is contributing to making the idea of the divided and introspective self a middle-class psychological value and fascination.

Aaron Burr's script titillates the narrator's curiosity. He depicts Burr – not unlike John Milton's Satan in *Paradise Lost* (1667) – as complex, contradictory, romantic, and interesting, as the possessor of individual and psychological capital. "How singular that a character, imperfect, ruined, blasted, as this man was, excites a stronger interest than if he had reached the highest earthly perfection of which its original element would admit!" (XI: 373). By implication, a concern with self-disclosure, slips, multiple meanings, and emotional conflict is what makes literature "deep" and "individual."

Both Poe and Hawthorne may well have been responding to the business orientation of new handwriting manuals. Eighteenth-century authors

of these manuals emphasized that penmanship is an art to be mastered. But by the 1820s authors of chirography texts focused on training the business "hand" on a mass scale. Henry Dean's popular *Analytical Guide to the Art of Penmanship* (1807), for example, offers a system to "lessen the labour" of writing by decreasing the number of strokes. His standardized approach, he claims, is opposed to those "whose interest it is to envelop in mystery things the most plain and simple." Dean acknowledges that merchants and clerks shun "ornamental" writing.[15]

Although eighteenth-century handwriting guides equate character and penmanship, their ideological stress is not so much on disclosing or expressing character through writing, but on acquiring socially sanctioned "useful" character traits through the practice of writing. In a similar vein, Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography* (Part One was published in 1791) frames writing as an activity that supports self-fashioning: the young Franklin learns his "individual" style by industriously imitating the essay style and wit of Joseph Addison and Richard Steele. Franklin encodes his slips in life with no deep, romantic significance as allegorical keys to his true, underlying individuality. He more playfully classifies his slips as "errata."[16]

Hawthorne's sketch participated in an emerging cultural debate about what counts as significant in evaluating selfhood. Mid nineteenth-century biographers of public figures had heated disagreements about whether they should only regard civic accomplishments as a "life," or probe private experience as the key that unlocks the meaning of public actions. "A Book of Autographs" sides with the latter group.[17]

Hawthorne's "Foot-prints on the Sea-shore" (1838) promotes a similar innerselfing. Here too Hawthorne inscribes involuntary disclosure – slips of the foot – as meaningful evidence of one's individual and psychological singularity. "By tracking our foot-prints in the sand we track our nature in its wayward course, and steal a glance upon it, when it never dreams of being so observed. Such glances always make us wiser" (IX: 454). The strand is like a psychological mirror that reflects moods and fantasies. It provides a compensatory therapeutic antidote to the standardizing world of marketplaces and work. Fascinated by the prospect of tracing his own footprints, the narrator predicts: "I shall think my own thoughts, and feel my own emotions, and possess my own individuality unviolated" (IX: 461). Perusing one's footprints seems tantamount to repossessing one's self – something perhaps also attempted through that other form of inscription called literary writing.

The "individuality" in this sketch – like the divided subjectivity that Hawthorne's narrator values in "A Book of Autographs" – is conceptualized according to the social logic of difference: not only does the individual imagine himself or herself as different from others, but more subtly as

being constituted internally by differences. Hawthorne's narrator seeks to "possess" that depth of difference as a cultural sign of subjective potency (his never wholly fathomable "individuality"). Yet the emotionally reinvigorated narrator accumulates this psychological capital before returning to the crowded marketplace. If nineteenth-century domesticity performed this ideological function – with its sentimental power to funnel male workers, repaired by "angels in the house," back to the battleground of the marketplace – here a therapeutic preoccupation with one's (fantasies of) self performs a similar ideological recycling.

In "Monsieur du Miroir" (1837) Hawthorne complicates his reader's assumptions about his or her own individuality. Hawthorne is drawn less to a categorical understanding of individuality as an essence that can be repossessed than to a relational understanding of individuality as a class abstraction, a class identity, a class form of selfing. The narrator reflects on his reflection in the mirror and on the distortions of his reflections. He sees an unstable, fragmented self. But he begins to identify individuality not as an essence that is inherently different from itself, but as a cultural image ("monsieur"). It is "doubtful," the narrator concludes with literary self-reflexivity, "whether M. du Miroir have aught of humanity but the figure" (x: 159). "Figure" means body shape and literary trope. Hawthorne nudges his reader to reflect on how figures – literary figures – function in cultural selfing, and more specifically on how figures produced through culture, language, and vocabularies of selfhood shape notions of self-revelation. "Ah," the narrator confesses, "this M. du Miroir is a slippery fellow!" (x: 166). Slips of the hand or of the tongue are not self-evidently significant; rather these actions are culturally encoded to be read as meaningful reflections of "inner" individuality.

The "slippery" figure in the mirror does *not* yield intelligible truth – as an abstracted, contextless representation. Hawthorne does suggest that the psychological preoccupation with individual reflection is a characteristic of class identity. "The members of M. du Miroir's family have been accused, perhaps justly, of visiting their friends often in splendid halls, and seldom in darksome dungeons" (x: 166).

Hawthorne's self-reflexive emphasis on the figurative quality of identity is important in many of his *anti-allegorical allegories* (an ingenious formulation I borrow from Michael Davitt Bell).[18] If allegory posits an inner essence or meaning in a character – for instance, Edmund Spenser's Redcrosse Knight in *Faerie Queene* (1590) is an allegorical figure for Faith – an anti-allegorical method casts doubt on such clearcut internal definitions. Where an allegorist might represent a character whose characteristic of inner self seems palpable or natural, an anti-allegorist would be more interested in showing *how* the

social assignment of cultural figures and allegories to characters may result in the shaping of their inner selves in particular ways.

"Egotism; Or, the Bosom Serpent" (1843) demonstrates the psychologizing self-definitional power that cultural figures can wield. In this tale Roderick Elliston seems to gestate a radar-like serpent in his bosom. It either detects or imaginatively allegorizes (encodes) serpents in the bosom of others. (The cause of Roderick's ailment – or singularity – is ambiguous, but it may be rooted in his obsessive jealousy about his estranged wife [x: 270–71].) Roderick's socially disruptive snake-charming grows intriguingly ridiculous until it becomes obvious that Hawthorne wishes his readers to read it not in any reductive way as a psychological allegory or a case study of compulsion based on the premise of a universal snake-infested inner self, but more complexly as a self-critical and parodic anti-allegorical allegory of a psychological allegorist run amok (x: 277). Hawthorne motivates readers to consider his culture's dominant range of figures or stereotypes that shape self-imagining (here the religious-based idea of woman-as-bosomy-serpent [x: 268]). He hints that subjectivity can become pathologically psychologized by the ideologically limited cultural allegories, symbols, and images made available to represent it. Read in this theoretical light the tale may be more about cultural obsession production than obsession and more about the process of cultural innerselfing (the self popularly conceptualized as snakepit) than the public exposure of humanity's reptilian interiority. To rework Zenobia's comment about Priscilla, readers may wonder: is Roderick the type of obsessional snakes-on-the-brain manhood such as Judeo-Christian culture has spent centuries making it?

"The Birth-Mark" (1843) is another self-reflexive, anti-allegorical allegory about the allegorizing operations of culture. Aylmer, a rather literary monomaniacal alchemist, plots his experiments in a library stocked with pseudo-scientific lore. He allegorizes the birthmark of Georgiana, his beautiful newlywed, not just as her sole aesthetic flaw, but as her "liability to sin, sorrow, decay, and death" (x: 39). As the tale unfolds Aylmer induces his bride to re-encode her birthmark – in the shape of a crimson hand on her left cheek – in his categories and thus to reread herself and her inner significance. Hawthorne exhibits the power of culture not only to compel its subjects to read and reread themselves along certain lines, but to produce obsession and pathologize bodies. Georgiana is thus culturally and allegorically innerselfed as she compulsively embraces Aylmer's – and, in a more encompassing sense, her culture's – pathological allegory of flawed womanhood. Culture is efficacious as a socializing force – as a sleight of hand – when it persuades its subjects that the identities and norms it applies to them originate deep within their nature. Indeed, the tale suggests that culture

can give women the psychological incentive to pathologize themselves – a byproduct of the intense ideological pressure to perform as "angels in the house."

Some mid-century women, however, as Hawthorne knew, identified and rejected feminized heartmaking, headmaking, and bodymaking – cultural angelmaking. Contemporary *Godey's Lady's Book* critics dissented from feminized innerselfing. They objected that patriarchal culture's pathologizing of women's bodies relied on convincing women to read themselves and their putatively "feminine" essences in insidious ways.[19] Georgiana's cosmetic surgery transmutes her into a feminized "angel" in the house expurgated not of sin, sorrow, decay, and death, but of life.

One dimension of the historicity of Aylmer's and Georgiana's lethal allegorical experiment in angel stereotyping is that they experience the ideological pressure to carry it out not historically but psychologically. Hawthorne also complexly situates this seemingly "psychological" tension between husband and wife in history through the multivalent figure of the "bloody" (x: 38) hand-under-erasure. Georgiana's pathologized "hand" in marriage links her to an emerging industrial world (often figured in contemporary writings as an alchemy that transmutes nature) in which deskilled workers increasingly were being called and controlled as "hands." Hawthorne-the-theorist bonds the social predicament of the angel-in-training with that of alienated workers who had less of a hand in determining the conditions of their labor. As I have argued in detail elsewhere, Hawthorne's rich cultural symbolism challenges readers of this tale to retheorize the more-than-psychological gender relations he depicts as being connected to larger social, industrial, and class relations that produced compensatory middle-class ideological and emotional needs for clearly ordered sex roles.[20]

Hawthorne's theoretical scope is as expansive in *The Scarlet Letter*. In just a few sentences Hawthorne makes Hester Prynne his most far-reaching cultural theorist. As I noted, in *Blithedale* Zenobia asserts that men have long attempted to "make" women – a concise articulation of the social construction of gender theme earlier allegorized in "The Birth-Mark." Hester's fleeting revolutionary vision goes beyond Zenobia's constructionism to wonder about what purposes the establishment of sexual difference serve in the reproduction of society at large. Through Hester Hawthorne intimated – as he did more symbolically and less explicitly in "The Birth-Mark" – that gender innerselfing of a certain kind was structurally requisite because it helped make the social fabrication of systemic power and emotional life possible. Hester predicts that for women to "assume a fair and suitable position," three reconstructions must occur: first, "the whole system of society is to be torn down, and built up anew"; second, men must modify the "hereditary

habit" – conventional notions of masculinity – that has come to seem like "their nature" but which is not; and third, women must undergo "a still mightier change" in their role, self-images, expectations, and feelings than men (I: 165–66). Hester grasps that the binary classification of sex roles is locked into the economic, political, religious, and cultural operation of the whole social system, and that any tinkering with these seemingly "opposite" gender roles (that challenges the naturalness of this "opposition") may threaten the reproductive powers of the system.

Hawthorne goes only so far in his momentary theoretical empowerment of Hester. Her perception that seemingly discrete sectors of social power are interdependent remains vague. This vagueness helps make the vast project of social and gender change seem, if not quite inconceivable, then hopeless. Hawthorne punishes Hester for her unfeminine ability to theorize in two ways. All that brainwork, Hawthorne decides, must make her unlovely, less of a woman. More damning, she sacrifices what Hawthorne maintains is the regular feminine throb of her heart (I: 166). Even Hester's vision warns that the woman who tries to "undergo a mightier change" risks evaporating "the ethereal essence, wherein she has her truest life" (I: 165–66). Hawthorne here tries to regain control of Hester by innerselfing her – by defining the female "essence" she has compromised. Although Hester herself recognizes that gender selfing is one important way in which social power reproduces its complex structure of expectation, incentive, normality, and need, Hawthorne would have his readers believe that it is Hester's determinative emotional attachment to therapeutic angelhood and motherhood that restrains her from further revolutionary theorizing and action. Hawthorne lets Hester blow the whistle on cultural innerselfing (the systemic feminization of females) as a theoretical prelude to redefining and containing her as an emotional product of this innerselfing.

The cultural job of industrial-era soulmaking

"The Artist of the Beautiful" (1844) is one of Hawthorne's most complex contributions to the cultural theory of subjectivity formation. Owen Warland, the aspiring romantic artist, repudiates his trade as a mender of mechanical signs of the time – timepieces – to invent what he construes as a sign of the timeless – a minute mechanical butterfly made of modified watch parts. The tale, a mix of ideological crosscurrents, at turns both affirms and criticizes the romantic urge for aesthetic and subjective autonomy and transcendence. It prompts readers to consider some of the historical motives and needs of romantics who try to use culture to fabricate what they imagine to be "spirit."

Aylmer aspires to be not just an alchemical spiritualizer but a soulmaker in whose "grasp the veriest clod of earth assumed a soul" (x: 49). Warland, another monomaniac, is likewise obsessed "with the notion of putting spirit into machinery" (x: 459) – an objective akin to the American literary author's cultural challenge to put "soul" or "individuality" into what Thomas Carlyle in "Signs of the Times" (1829) called the "Age of Machinery." In this famous essay Carlyle, more than Hawthorne, shows some concern for the plight of the "living artisan [who] is driven from his workshop to make room for a speedier and inanimate one." Hawthorne's artisanal artist seems to regard individualist alienation more than class exploitation as the pressing problem in an industrial America that worships industrial utility, conformity, and time-discipline. Carlyle, who like Hawthorne in "Fire Worship" is attentive to the effects of industrialization on subjectivity, articulates this cultural and spiritual alienation as the fear that industrial culture has made "men mechanical in head and heart, as well as in hand."[21] Hawthorne's story, however, goes beyond Carlyle's critique in its analytical consideration of the romantic invention of subjective potency, not oversimply as a spiritual protest against industrial capitalism, but as a reproductive mechanism of industrial capitalism and as a strategic device to demarcate class difference.

As Warland labors at animating his butterfly machinery, he rather conventionally believes that he has been inspired by his former master's daughter, Annie Hovenden. But Annie's artisanal class identification with "iron" men and utilitarian values shatters Warland (and his butterfly machine-in-progress). Annie falls for the town blacksmith, whose vision and values are more grounded and commonsensical than the artist's. Hence artisanal Annie fails Warland as a middle-class symbol of "true womanhood" – a potential "angel of his life." The artist imagines his erstwhile muse "fad[ing] from angel into ordinary woman" as she rejects him and displays her artisanal sympathies. Of course, Annie does not know she is failing the artist's test because she is unaware that she is supposed to behave like a middle-class angel. In his imposition of conventional gender expectations on the artisanal maid, the artist makes her "as much a creation of his own, as the mysterious piece of mechanism" (x: 464).

Warland's beautiful, artfully made mechanical butterfly can be read as his miniature technological winged substitute for a shrunken angel in the house. His flying machine lacks angel's wings but possesses butterfly wings and even emits a "halo" (x: 474). This well-oiled butterfly-with-a-halo features some stereotypical feminine characteristics: it is charmingly vulnerable (crushable), functions as a decorative object of display, never talks back, sparkles (no dangerous, illuminating, or high-flying fireworks), and it responds sensitively and immediately to its beholder's emotional state. In 1838 women's rights

pioneer Sarah Grimké recounted how she refused to accept her lot among the ornamental "butterflies of the fashionable world." Three decades later Fanny Fern, another feisty advocate of wingless women, exhorted her readers not to allow themselves to be made into "a butterfly . . . [or a] machine, which, once wound up by the marriage ceremony, is expected to click with undeviating monotony until Death stops the hands."[22] The butterflies that Grimké and Fern have in mind are the opposite of the unfeminized, "impenetrable," iron-bodied, golden-winged gorgons Hawthorne describes in his reworking of the Medusa myth, "The Gorgon's Head" (1851). The militant gorgons – not unlike women's rights supporters, often termed "monsters" in antebellum America – literally petrify frightened males and females who behold their flight (VII: 12–13, 28–29). Hawthorne's tale of butterflymaking implies with self-irony that the male artist who cannot find a compliant angel of flesh and blood might opt to construct his own version to ideal, insect-scale specifications.

Because the unangelic Annie, according to the narrator, is not "enlightened by the deep intelligence of love" (x: 460) and is "incapable of any deep response" (x: 464), she cannot interpret the supposedly deep spiritual significance of the artist's dainty butterfly, which appears to her and other members of her class as useless. Thus it behooves the artist to spell out his butterfly's symbolic depth for the seemingly shallow Annie. In it, he announces, "is represented the intellect, the imagination, the sensibility, the soul, of an Artist of the Beautiful!" (x: 471). But the butterfly's glittering fragments and wheels within wheels have no inherent meaning. It is the artist who assigns its fragments and wheels deep cultural meaning, significance, and value: his cultural imagination makes its motor and gears advertise what he calls the (male artist's) "soul."

Warland's intricate invention also operates as a mechanism of class distinction. The butterfly's alleged symbolic interiority – the soul or individuality of the artist – makes the uncomprehending (or perhaps just uninterested) artisanal class seem superficial. According to the tale's scheme of representation, the blacksmiths and watchmakers of this "iron" class appreciate only signs of the time, not what romantic members of the middle class prefer to read as signs of the timeless. Warland's very name suggests warfare. Even though Warland himself is a member of the artisanal class, he is much more like an alienated middle-class artist in disguise. On one level, his butterfly is his class project, class mobility, class flight. The former watchmender's romantic spiritualized reading of his text-with-wings elevates him, at least in his own eyes, high above the merely mechanical, seemingly non-individual, soulless "lower" orders. His visionless former master, Peter Hovenden, is in fact going blind from having practiced his trade (x: 449).

Hawthorne's symbolic tale climaxes as the infant of Annie and her black-smith crushes the unique butterfly. Warland, rather than being upset or shocked, derives immense artistic and even retributive satisfaction from wit-nessing this destruction of his mechanical winged "soul," as if by demol-ishing his butterfly the "iron" people have destroyed their own souls. For Warland this is further evidence of the war in which his ostensible aesthetic transcendence is a sort of weapon and strategy. He knows that his fellow myopic class members will interpret his aesthetic yet mechanical invention as a merely decorative plaything, a waste of time in a culture dedicated to the Franklinian maxim "time is money." The butterfly's sophisticated machinery cannot be mass produced and is not for sale as a commodity. So the smug artist, with a calm, self-assured vindictiveness, emerges from the final scene with a symbolic victory in his pulverized butterfly. The laboring class, he is convinced, has shown its hand – even its children (bereft of Wordsworthian innocence) are made of iron and spiritually damned. Whereas the artist, still in possession of a higher vision of himself and his spiritual worth, expe-riences himself as an aristocrat of subjectivity – an artful prince among artisans.

Hawthorne's artist's romantic middle-class understanding of art differs from the way many mechanics' institutes of the 1820s and 1830s sought to utilize art and culture. Addresses delivered before the Massachusetts Charita-ble Mechanics Association, for instance, stress that the artisan's education in science and drawing is his pathway to self-making, self-respect, self-control, and the fulfillment of his civic and national responsibility. Speakers at the association aimed to elevate the cultural distinction of the practical and the useful.[23]

Timothy Claxton's *Memoir of a Mechanic* (1839) also has this agenda. Claxton, who began his career as a mechanic (a whitesmith) in England, even-tually helped found the Boston Mechanics' Institution (1826), the Boston Lyceum (1829), and the Boston Mechanics' Lyceum (1831). His career reads like an inversion of Warland's. As a boy, he gleefully built a clock and learned the usefulness of mechanical drawing. Although Claxton celebrates the inventive "mind [that] marks out tracks that have never been trodden before," he derides efforts to invent a "perpetual motion machine" and praises Paris' Academy of Sciences for denouncing all such experiments as "a mere waste of time." In his youth Claxton himself had labored under the delusion that he could invent a perpetual motion machine, but he abandoned this pursuit to invent a better mousetrap (literally). In 1832 he established a periodical in Boston titled *The Young Mechanic*, which "sprung from the noble desire to elevate the character of his class."[24] Claxton is the ideal young mechanic that Hawthorne's watchmaker refuses to emulate. Rejecting

the artisanal ideology of self-making, Warland reinvents upward mobility as middle-class butterflymaking.

Intriguingly, while Hawthorne's tale sometimes seems to subscribe to the notion of an essential or universal selfhood (here signified as the noncon-formist "soul" of the true artist), his story also stimulates readers to imag-ine, or visualize, gender, individuality, and interiority as cultural products of class-identity machinery. By this I mean a cultural or class machinery of individuality, of aesthetic, spiritual, or psychological depth that is designed by one class in part to hoist itself above a class encoded as a "lower" class whose "iron," mechanical members are presumed to be insufficiently deep, individual, universal, literary, and human. The romantic artist therefore car-ries out a crucial class program: he not only puts his soul into his work, he puts his idea of a soul into his middle-class readers. His soul machinery puts a class-specific soul and a class-specific individuality (disguised and aestheti-cized as universal individuality) into readers who also are workers – mainly middle-class workers. The romantic artist's ideological class assignment is to decorate this middle-class idea of individuality – to make it seem interior, spiritual, aesthetic, and elevating, and even, by implication, psychologically rebellious and thus subjectively potent. Ideally, the romantic soul will not seem like a product of industrial machinery or industrial times – the soul's great ideological utility will be that it seems like it has nothing to do with utility.

Yet I cannot stress enough that Hawthorne roots the "transcendence" of this class project in several ways. Hawthorne's representation of Warland's obsession with working on his butterfly, for example, brings to mind con-temporary advice manuals' warnings against the sin of "solitary vice" – masturbation.[25] The artist became "more absorbed in a secret occupation, which drew all his science and manual dexterity into itself." His labors to spiritualize his "machinery" required the "delicate power of his fingers" (x: 452).

Operating in tension with the narrator's (sometimes ironic) sympathy for the artist's tactile butterfly labors is the telling fact that this winged soul is a mechanical product of the industrial revolution. Warland uses his soul machine both to launch a dubious and easily crushed flight from the capital-ist world and to legitimate his feeling of human and spiritual superiority – class superiority – over his fellow "iron" artisans. The artist's seemingly defiant language of romantic individuality, Hawthorne suggests, is also the *spiritualized language of class*. Warland's imaginary "liberation" into spir-itual autonomy is individualized rather than expansively politicized. Left behind in this "liberation" is the artisanal and shopkeeping class who – far from being seen as occupying a lower rung in an unfair power structure – are

simply depicted (by Warland and sometimes by Hawthorne's narrator) as too obtuse to appreciate the intricate, mechanical flapping of the (middle-class) soul.

Hawthorne's romantic middle-class individualizing of the artist, his interests, and his "genius" is more apparent when compared with Pueblo and Navajo concepts of artistry. "There was always some kind of artistic endeavor that people set themselves to, although they did not necessarily articulate it as 'art' in the sense of western civilization," observes the Acoma author Simon Ortiz. "One lived and expressed an artful life, whether it was in ceremonial singing and dancing, architecture, painting, speaking, or in the way one's social-cultural life was structured." As the anthropologist Gary Witherspoon notes, in Navajo culture just about everyone is an artist. One stands out if one does *not* practice the arts. The Navajos' collective commitment to beautifying the world through art differs from Warland's more individualist concerns. They do not conceive of art as a practice through which one cultivates a sense of oneself as aesthetically, psychologically, or spiritually autonomous from society.[26] In the end Warland's spiritual and subjective potency seems to come from cynical social disengagement – writing off the possibility of changing society through art and perhaps writing off society altogether.

But read more contextually the romantic artist's apparent disengagement is also a peculiar form of engagement. Warland's understanding of his rebelliousness has relevance even today as a romantic manifesto for American artists, authors, and dissidents. The American author or artist, like the butterflymaker, must often demonstrate that it is possible to refashion and reassemble not only the tools and products, but the values and perceptions of an industrial world that too frequently categorizes and dismisses certain types of "art" as useless, meaningless, unprofitable. If industrial capitalism at times tries not only to crush the author's or artist's work, but to mock and demolish the alternative constructions of values and meaningfulness that informed its creation, Hawthorne's tale suggests that this destruction will fail if the creator develops and exercises the cultural power to resignify the worth not just of the creation but of the endeavor. However disengaged Hawthorne's artist may want to be, his "spirit" is constituted not just by imagined autonomy but by relationship and struggle – adversarial engagement. "[T]he ideal artist . . . must keep his faith in himself . . . he must stand up against mankind and be his own sole disciple, both as respects his genius, and the objects to which it is directed" (x: 454). The story clarifies that creating "beauty" in the structure of meaning, value, incentive, motive, and fascination termed "America" is never solely a diversion; it is unavoidably an engagement with what is, and – given what "America" is – it is in some cases an intense engagement with reimagining what "America" can be.

Although the artist's romantic rebellion retains its utopian (and individualistic) appeal in modern America, it must not obfuscate the class engagement of the artist's rebellion that I have sought to clarify – a class engagement that may have yet another dimension than that of the middle class versus artisanal class conflict. In the 1930s William Charvat noted that most American romantic authors seemed "indifferent" to the "distress of the worker" in the depression of 1837, and that the class tension that did absorb them was "the struggle . . . between their own homogeneous patrician society and a rising materialistic middle class without education and tradition." Hawthorne may have transposed this "intramural" middle-class antagonism onto the conflict between artist and artisans.[27]

Yet the tale also suggests that the middle class as a whole had begun to put individualistic soul rebellion to tactical use in forming its ideologically diverse spectrum of subjectivities. If on one level the tale promotes the ideological oppositions individual versus society, or artist versus philistines, on another level it foregrounds romantic individuality as an industrial-era product and a compensatory class need. True, Warland's romanticism rebels against Franklinian values essential to the economic elevation of the middle class. Still, for all of the differences between Franklin's work-ethic literature and the romantic artist's aesthetic of transcendence, Franklin equipped workers with secular incentive while the romantic artist outfitted them with compensatory secular souls to help mitigate their alienation (even better, to transmute their acknowledgment of their experience of alienation into a sign of their subjective depth). Franklin and the romantic artist both developed technologies of selfing that individualized motives and aspirations – developments unlikely to trigger collective rebellion. Hawthorne portrays a subtle social-emotional system: to operate as a flexible machinery of individualistic motive production, capitalism required not just Franklinian entrepreneurs, inventors, and proletarians who would encode self-sacrifice and competition as necessary for character-building and success, it also, more riskily, needed authors and artists to expand the cultural range of incentives, self-images, and permissible (individualized) rebellions – it needed them to serve as designers and advertisers of cultural-spiritual breathing space, as soulmakers. Mid-century capitalism was "iron" *and* romantic: it required subjectivity – "individuality" – to emotionally grease its gears and to serve as a relatively containable focus of discontent.

In 1840 Hawthorne worked as a weigher and gauger of coal and salt at the Boston Custom House – an alienating venture that, like his later experience

in Salem's Custom House, made him all the more keen to return to the financial gamble of writing. On 7 April, he recorded that he was "plagued" by two sets of coal-shovelers whose simultaneous labors he had to tally in icy weather. "Any sort of bodily and earthly torment," he complained about the (supervisory) work, "may serve to make us sensible that we have a soul that is not within the jurisdiction of such shabby demons, – it separates the immortal within us from the mortal." The next moment, less secure in his self-evident, autonomous "soul," and blasted by mortal necessity, he confessed: "the wind has blown my brains into such confusion that I cannot philosophize now."[28] Hawthorne knew that American romantic literature, paradoxically, as an expanding industry of cultural selfing, helped put soul back into American work(ers) even when it despised the work.

Coda

There are at least three reasons why I keep turning to Hawthorne to better theorize the powers and workings of culture. First, many critics and readers have long praised Hawthorne for his historical knowledge and understanding. But his subtle historical thinking focused on more than eras, movements, material transformations, or famous political figures. In much of his work Hawthorne demonstrated a theoretically expansive grasp of the historicity of "personal" relations, emotions, and bodies. Like some modern historians and theorists of subjective forms, he frequently concentrated on how social power was reproduced through the constitution of subjectivities – what I have termed cultural processes of selfing and innerselfing. Hawthorne certainly contributed to the ideological making of the nineteenth-century middle-class psychological self. Yet he also repeatedly made the cultural fabrication of feelings, self-reflection, self-monitoring, and identity his theme, and often saw hyper-psychological relations as the strained effect of these fabrications. Furthermore, he probed connections between these fabrications and the creation of gender, class, and individual difference in America.

Although Hawthorne wrote during the period of forced "Indian" removal from East to West (the "Trail of Tears"), the imperialist war against Mexico, and mounting abolitionist protests against slavery, his fiction was not especially concerned with the production of racial difference and race relations. When his fiction did attend to race matters, it tended to survey the situation of Natives (evident in "Main-street") more than that of African Americans. Some of Hawthorne's fictions, however, resonantly register symbolic links between the constructions of emotions, self-images, and social power that did preoccupy him and the making of whiteness. Curiously, in "The Birth-Mark" Georgiana's whitewashed, "removed" red hand is a miniature version of red

hands that Natives painted on their faces – represented vividly in several of George Catlin's much-exhibited and popular "Indian" portraits of the 1830s and 1840s.[29] And in "The Minister's Black Veil" (1836) Reverend Hooper's black veil induces widespread feelings of guilt in his New England Puritan parishioners – just when, in Hawthorne's own time, abolitionists were indicting New England for its complicity with slavery. Both tales exhibit charged white anxieties about acknowledging color – red, black – as a public issue.

Second, I appreciate Hawthorne-the-whistleblower – the artist who used fiction to challenge some of his own ostensible ideological preferences and limits. The Hawthorne who defended conventional domesticity and gender roles in his journals, letters, and fiction also created Hester, Zenobia, and Miriam in *The Marble Faun* (1860). Even when Hawthorne plots to contain the critical and dissenting forces he unleashes, he often invests these forces with the power to fascinate and to question prevalent middle-class assumptions. If at one point Hawthorne laments that Hester-the-radical-theorist has not learned her lessons from the scarlet letter (I: 166), through much of the novel he complicates – unfixes – what the letter (adulteress, author, ambiguity, the first letter of the alphabet, allegory, angel, America, and so on) means. Hawthorne was not only a surveyor of customs, he was a surveyor of premises and of meaning production. Notwithstanding his occasional uneasiness in doing so, he often saw culture not as an authoritative given, but as potentially alterable processes, practices, performances, structures of significance, and systems of identification.

Third, when I contemplate Richard Ohmann's sagacious observation that "Human activity [is] always political, if not *only* political," I think of Hawthorne's cautionary parodies, anti-allegories, and parables of theoretical monomania.[30] If in "The Hall of Fantasy" (1843) Hawthorne, despite his skepticism, acknowledged that even "the heart of the staunchest conservative . . . could hardly have helped throbbing in sympathy with the spirit that pervaded these innumerable theorists . . . [who sought] a better and purer life than had yet been realized on earth" (x: 180–81), in "Earth's Holocaust" (1844) he more resolutely recoiled from fierce theorist-reformers who cast the objects of their consuming hatred into a mammoth bonfire. Perhaps no tale illustrates Hawthorne's wariness of ideological single-vision as visually and in some instances as compassionately as "The Minister's Black Veil." The story begins one Sunday in the late seventeenth century when Reverend Hooper for ever dons a black veil and – as I mentioned above – startles his congregation. Hooper's funereal fig leaf has myriad effects. On the one hand, his preaching becomes more moving. Hooper's visual emblem – which, like Roderick's serpent, Georgiana's birthmark, and Warland's butterfly, has no intrinsic significance – serves as a screen upon which the cultural and

religious meanings that Puritans associate with blackness and veils are projected. It constantly reminds his flock that they deny their sinfulness and mortality as they live their daily life. More parishioners than ever become converted when seeing themselves and their Puritanized souls in Hooper's inky mirror. On the other hand, they become nervous about mingling with their minister, who perceives everyone, including himself, only in one light – or lack of light. More like a prince of darkness than a white-veiled bride of Christ, Hooper reads Holy Scripture through the obscuring lens of his veil.

The minister's "faint smile" that shows below the veil – perhaps not so unlike Sheriff Hawthorne's constable's smile – may signal both the spiritual and egotistical pleasure he gets from making public the invisible black veils that he believes drape his fellow sinners. His in-your-face reformism blurs the boundary between his righteousness and self-righteousness (the sin of pride). Hawthorne seems to suggest that when *every* relation in life is seen allegorically through one filter, there are distortions as well as illuminations. Cultural theorists would do well to remember this. Sin is real, Hawthorne realizes, if one accepts dominant definitions of "sin." Yet he questions how much significance should be placed on one's preoccupation with sin and complicity with sin. To be sure, Hawthorne is not prescribing evasiveness, forgetfulness, and denial as culturally salutary – though the opening scene, before Hooper makes his veiled debut, is graced with Sunday sunshine, frisky romance, and "lusty" church bell ringing. However, he does suggest that monomaniacally scenting out sin can itself become a sinful pathologizing of others. What Ohmann and Hawthorne, taken together, seem to say is that there is even more at stake in thinking critically about culture than unveiling its relations to the reproduction of systemic social contradiction and complicity – a crucial and sometimes hazardous task, and that the ability to imagine a culturally vital reorganization of life, value, and feeling depends partly on recognizing the life-enhancing and playful as well as mystifying and damaging powers of culture, and partly on maintaining critical humility.

NOTES

1. I owe a special debt to Fumio Ano, President of the Hawthorne Society of Japan, for inviting me to deliver the earliest version of this chapter as a "special lecture" at the society's annual meeting in Nihon University in Tokyo, May 2000. My many conversations with him and with Keisuke Kawakubo, Vice-president of the society, yielded great insights into my subject, especially when we compared nineteenth-century Japan and America.

2. See "The Procession of Life" (1843), "The Celestial Railroad" (1843), "The New Adam and Eve" (1843), "The Intelligence Office" (1844), "The Christmas Banquet" (1844).

3. See Joel Pfister, "Afterword," in Hawthorne, *A Wonder-Book for Girls and Boys*, illustrations by Walter Crane, Introduction by Ola D'Aulaire, Afterword by Joel Pfister (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 243–54, especially p. 247.

4. Oscar B. Jacobson, *Kiowa Indian Art* (1929), quoted in Oliver LaFarge et al., *Introduction to American Indian Art* (1931) (Glorieta, NM: Rio Grande Press, 1970), p. 109.

5. From Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," translated by Fredric Jameson in Jameson's *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), p. 281.

6. For a reading of this sketch in historical relation to an interpretation of a parlor stove, see Joel Pfister, "A Garden in the Machine: Reading a Mid-Nineteenth-Century Two-Cylinder Parlor Stove as Cultural Text," in Jules David Prown and Kenneth Haltman, eds., *American Artifacts: Essays in Material Culture* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2000), pp. 149–66.

7. See Joel Pfister, "On Conceptualizing the Cultural History of Emotional and Psychological Life in America," in Joel Pfister and Nancy Schnog, eds., *Inventing the Psychological: Toward a Cultural History of Emotional Life in America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 17–59, see p. 21.

8. On these matters see Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Vintage, 1962), pp. 40, 386, 413, and Ariès, "The Family and the City," in Virginia Tufte and Barbara Myerhoff, eds., *Changing Images of the Family* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 32.

9. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), p. 324.

10. On nineteenth-century readings of Hawthorne as "deep," see the anonymous review of Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales* in *Boston Miscellany of Literature* 1 (February 1842): 92; anonymous review of Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* in *Graham's Magazine* 36 (May 1850): 346; Mr. Duyckinck, "Nathaniel Hawthorne," *The Literary World* 6 (March 1850): 323–25; Charles Hale, "Nathaniel Hawthorne," *To-Day: A Boston Literary Journal* 38 (September 1852): 177–81, see p. 179; Anne C. Lynch Botta, *Hand-book of Universal Literature* (New York: Derby & Jackson, 1860), p. 537; Henry T. Tuckerman, "Nathaniel Hawthorne," *Southern Literary Messenger* 17 (June 1851): 344–49. Also see Joel Pfister, *The Production of Personal Life: Class, Gender, and the Psychological in Hawthorne's Fiction* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), p. 27 (James) and pp. 1–2, 5, 9, 17, 27–28, 50–52, 140–41 (Freud and Freudian approaches to Hawthorne).

11. Here Hawthorne theorizes in ways that Michel Foucault would develop in his work, particularly *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1980).

12. Freud, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1901), ed. James Strachey, trans. Alan Tyson (New York: Norton, 1966).

13. See Hawthorne, "Phrenology," *The American Magazine of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge* 2 (March 1836): 337; Hawthorne, "The Science of Noses," *The American Magazine of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge* (March 1836):

268; Sarah J. Hale, "An Evening's Conversation About Autographs," *Godey's* 22 (April 1841): 146–49, see p. 146.

14. Poe, "Autography" (*Southern Literary Messenger*, February 1836), "A Chapter on Autography" (*Graham's Magazine*, December 1841), "An Appendix on Autography" (*Graham's Magazine*, January 1842); republished in *The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, vol. xv, ed. James A. Harrison (New York: AMS Press, 1965), pp. 139–261.

15. See Henry Dean's second edition, *Analytical Guide to the Art of Penmanship* (Baltimore: S. Jeffries, 1808). Also consult Tamara Plakins Thornton, *Handwriting in America: A Cultural History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996).

16. Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1964), pp. 43, 70, 86, 96, 99, 122, 129.

17. See Scott E. Casper, *Constructing American Lives: Biography and Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

18. Michael Davitt Bell, *The Development of the American Romance: The Sacrifice of Relation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

19. See Harriet Beecher Stowe's letter to the editor, "Editor's Table," *Godey's* 26 (January 1843): 58 and Sarah J. Hale, "Editor's Table," *Godey's* 26 (May 1843): 249–50. For a recent example of how dominant social forces can stigmatize women with birthmarks, see Steven Greenhouse, "Lifetime Affliction Leads to a US Bias Suit," *New York Times* (30 March 2003): A14. When Samantha Robichaud, of Northport, Alabama, was considered for a promotion to manage a McDonald's fast-food restaurant, her supervisor informed her that her birthmark would forever hold her back. The author of the article is not wholly clear as to whether he reads Robichaud's birthmark or the social encoding and stigmatizing of her birthmark as her "lifetime affliction." Hawthorne was clearer about such matters.

20. Pfister, *Production of Personal Life*, pp. 13–58, and on Herman Melville's industrial versions of this tale – "The Bell-Tower" (1854) and "The Tartarus of Maids" (1855) – pp. 104–21.

21. Thomas Carlyle, "Signs of the Times," *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, vol. ii (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1876), p. 138.

22. See Sarah Grimké, *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Conditions of Women* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1970 [1838]), pp. 46–47 and Fanny Fern [Sara Payson Parton], "The Women of 1867," in her *Ruth Hall and Other Writings*, ed. Joyce W. Warren (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1986), pp. 343–44.

23. See *Annals of the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanics Association, 1795–1892* (Boston: Press of Rockwell and Churchill, 1892). I thank David Zonderman for recommending that I peruse this journal and Timothy Claxton's autobiography.

24. Timothy Claxton, *Memoir of a Mechanic: Being a Sketch of the Life of Timothy Claxton* (Boston: G. W. Light, 1839).

25. On the relevance of mid-century fears about solitary vice to Hawthorne's fiction, see Pfister, *Production of Personal Life*, pp. 23–24, 139–40.

26. Simon Ortiz, quoted in Patricia Penn Hilden, *When Nickels Were Indians: An Urban, Mixed-Blood Story* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press,

1995), p. 45. Gary Witherspoon, *Language and Art in the Navajo Universe* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1977), pp. 152–53.

27. William Charvat, "American Romanticism and the Depression of 1837" (1937), in Matthew J. Bruccoli, ed., *The Profession of Authorship in America, 1800–1870: The Papers of William Charvat* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1968), pp. 49–67, see pp. 64, 66.

28. Hawthorne, *American Note-Books*, in *The Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, vol. vi (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1882), pp. 221–22.

29. See Pfister, *Production of Personal Life*, p. 192 n. 36.

30. See Richard Ohmann's new introduction to the republication of his classic, *English in America: A Radical View of the Profession* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1996), p. xviii. For an analysis of some of the implications of Ohmann's insight, see Joel Pfister, "Complicity Critiques," *American Literary History* 12 (Fall 2000): 610–32.