

HAWTHORNE'S PREFACES

1. "When a writer calls his work a Romance, it need hardly be observed that he wishes to claim a certain latitude, both as to its fashion and material, which he would not have felt himself entitled to assume had he professed to be writing a Novel. The latter form of composition is presumed to aim at a very minute fidelity, not merely to the possible, but to the probable and ordinary course of man's experience. The former — while, as a work of art, it must rigidly subject itself to laws, and while 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." *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851)
2. "No author, without a trial, can conceive of the difficulty of writing a romance about a country where there is no shadow, no antiquity, no mystery, no picturesque and gloomy wrong, nor anything but a commonplace prosperity, in broad and simple daylight, as is happily the case with my dear native land. It will be very long, I trust, before romance writers may find congenial and easily handled themes, either in the annals of our stalwart republic, or in any characteristic and probable events of our individual lives. Romance and poetry, ivy, lichens, and wallflowers, need ruin to make them grow." *The Marble Faun* (1860)

JOHN WINTHROP, "A MODEL OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY", 1630

3. "The definition which the Scripture gives us of love is this: Love is the bond of perfection. First it is a bond or ligament. Secondly, it makes the work perfect. (...) First of all, true Christians are of one body in Christ (1 Cor. 12) (...) Secondly, the ligaments of this body which knit together are love. Thirdly, no body can be perfect which wants its proper ligament. (...) Nothing yields more pleasure and content to the soul than when it finds that which it may love fervently; for to love and live beloved is the soul's paradise both here and in heaven. In the State of wedlock there be many comforts to learn out of the troubles of that condition; but let such as have tried the most, say if there be any sweetness in that condition comparable to the exercise of mutual love."
4. "The end is to improve our lives to do more service to the Lord; the comfort and increase of the body of Christ, whereof we are members, that ourselves and posterity may be the better preserved from the common corruptions of this evil world, to serve the Lord and work out our salvation under the power and purity of his holy ordinances."
5. "Thus stands the cause between God and us. We are entered into covenant with Him for this work. We have taken out a commission. (...) Now if the Lord shall please to hear us, and bring us in peace to the place we desire, then hath He ratified this covenant and sealed our commission, and will expect a strict performance of the articles contained in it. (...) For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us. So that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause Him to withdraw His present help from us, we shall be made a story and a by-word through the world. (...) But if our hearts shall turn away, so that we will not obey, but shall be seduced, and worship other Gods, our pleasure and profits, and serve them; it is propounded unto us this day, we shall surely perish out of the good land whither we pass over this vast sea to possess it."

MARINA BOONYAPRASOP, *Hawthorne's Wilderness*, ANCHOR ACADEMIC PUBLISHING, 2013

6. "Some Christians, following the teachings of Antinomianism, believed that only God Himself could decide upon a person's fate which would implicate the possibility of civil, moral, and ethic disobedience, since no earthly deed could change the Lord's predestination (Covenant of Grace). Puritans, on the other hand, clearly rejected this thought, being convinced that the Elect had to work constantly on their faith and devoutness to God in order to achieve salvation (Covenant of Works)."
7. "Cotton Mather (...) argued that the devil was angry at the settlers, who had infringed on his former realm."

TERENCE MARTIN, *Nathaniel Hawthorne*, TWAYNE, 1965

8. "The scarlet letter serves as a vestige of a world that was and thereby as the entry to a world that will be."
9. "The idea that sympathy and warmth come from the 'people' is at the very center of Haw.'s democratic and artistic faith. (...) But it is the feelings rather than the ideas or perceptions of humanity that are to be trusted. (...) Haw. expresses his democratic faith by saying that the finite counterpart of supernatural revelation lies in the warm, intuitively correct heart of the people."
10. "Dim. is afflicted with a devious pride. He cannot surrender an identity which brings him the adulation of his parishioners, the respect and praise of his peers."
11. "Haw.'s second scaffold scene, which comes precisely at the middle of his romance, turns the moral structure of the first inside out. This is Dim.'s scene, staged at midnight rather than at mid-day."
12. "In the first scaffold scene, [Chill.] would know the name of Hes.'s partner; in the second, he does know; and, in the third, he tries desperately to keep others from knowing. (...) In contrast to the second scaffold scene, which Chill. comes to dominates, this final scene remains under the control of Dim."
13. "Hes., Dim., Chill., the scarlet letter itself — all signify more than one thing; all must be considered in more than one way. (...) [Haw.] dramatizes the double (or multiple) nature of every important character, thing, and event in his romance."
14. "The community has pinned the initial of her lover on her breast, then wondered for seven years who he might be."
15. "The consequences of the letter as penance are just the reverse of what the Puritan community thought they would be. A sin of passion, nursed by the memory of its sacredness, has blossomed into a sin of purpose."

RITA GOLLIN, *NH and the Truth of Dreams*, LOUISIANA STATE UP, 1979

16. "Daydreaming is psychologically necessary for [Hes. & Dim.], since each is essentially alone in the Puritan community. (...) With the single exception of the forest interlude, they can share intimate thoughts with no one."

JACK LYNCH ED., *Critical Insights: NH*, SALEM PRESS, 2010

Hugo McPherson, "TSL", 1969

17. "Haw. is studying the fate of the self in *Puritan* America; the book is his analysis and critique of the colonial society which evolved, finally, into the stifling narrowness of 'TCH'."
18. "Reason has so dominated Chill.'s career that it has cut him off from feeling, from the delights of the heart and the flesh which he sees imaged in Hes."
19. "[At the end, Chill.] has become the darkest, most deterministic Puritan of them all."
20. "[The Puritan community] believes above all in empirical fact and in law; when feeling or passion, sensual or artistic, go beyond orthodox limits, they are consistently related to the dark — to the Black Man."
21. "Pearl, through [Hes. & Dim.'s] fortitude, becomes a complete woman instead of a Puritan half-woman — the first representation of a new breed, the first *complete* American."

Evans L. Smith, "Re-figuring Revelations: NH's TSL", 1990

22. "In addition to the image of the end of the old world and the creation of the new, there are four other Biblical themes derived from Revelation which play crucial roles in the novel: the notion of unveiling, prophecy, the last battle, resurrection and judgment."
23. "After Dim. collapses on the scaffold, Hes. 'partly raised him, and supported his head against her bosom'. While at the beginning of the novel (...) she had been seen as a Madonna figure (...), here she is pictured as the Mater Dolorosa, the Pieta with the crucified one on her lap."

John Bayer, "Narrative techniques and the oral tradition in TSL", 1980

24. "The citizens of Boston function as a chorus, whose attitudes alternately coincide [with] and stand apart from those shared by the narrator and narratee."

HYATT WAGGONER, *Hawthorne: A Critical Study*, HARVARD UP, 1955

25. "[The beauty of the rose in Chapter 1] is the product not of choice but of necessity, of the laws of its being, so that it can be admired but not judged. Pearl, later in the story, is similarly immune from judgment."
26. "The red that runs through the book as a motif is almost always used ambiguously."

CHARLES SWANN, *NH: Tradition and Revolution*, CAMBRIDGE UP, 1991

27. "The ending of the novel invites us to consider that *society* rather than any individual may need a radical transformation, that, indeed, isolated individual transformation is virtually impossible."
28. "Hes. is asking for the Second Coming of Christ — only this time as a woman (...) and Hes. seems to be casting herself as a female John the Baptist."

29. "To be a custom-house officer is to be excluded from the ethical world of men in a way which ironically parallels Hes.'s situation."
30. "One purpose of 'TCH' is to demonstrate that the past can be reconstructed through the sympathetic and informed imagination."
31. "[In 'TCH'] Haw. stresses that he has a double past, and with that emphasis he prepares us for his concern with the different but ideally united realms of the public and private sides of human identity which is so crucial in the main story."
32. "The production of the text of *TSL* is presented as analogous to Hes.'s elaboration of the letter. Haw. transforms the sad groundwork of a simple fact about a way that seventeenth-century New England punished adultery into a complex narrative meditation on signs and meanings in history: Hes. transfigures a simple sign of society's condemnation of her transgression of its rules into a work of art."
33. "[Society's] intention to reduce Hes. to a government moral health warning would involve the impossible — the elimination of process — whether that process takes the form of the history of a community, of a self, or the interactions between the two. (...) The main narrative argues that history will vanquish symbolism's attempt to freeze time and meaning."
34. "Morality is above all social morality. (...) Hes.'s and Dim.'s adultery must be seen as wrong. (...) Adultery destroys the possibility of the fulfilment of private relationships and of wider public relationships. For Haw. it is only when the two are brought together that there is the possibility of sustained authentic life."
35. "Pearl is forced to exercise the function of a symbol not by the reader but by Hes. as she replicates what the authorities had done to her. (...) It is only with Dim.'s public confession that Pearl can become fully human and escape from the narrowness and distortion inherent in symbolic identity."
36. "The meeting in the forest deals with the impossibility of escape from one's personal history and the inadequacy of the appeal to nature."
37. "To be true, as Haw. admonishes us, is freely to declare ourselves to the world, to recognize that we cannot reject or deny the personal history that defines us."
38. "Haw., by giving Dim. and Hes. the role of prophet, brings the future into the sphere of the novel, so that readers are not (or at least should not be) trapped into conservatively dwelling in and on the past. With both characters, the reciprocal relationships between the public and private spheres are stressed and developed throughout the course of the novel. (One reason for the inadequacy of the appeal to nature is that it can only speak to the private side of man's being.)"

MICHAEL COLACURCIO ED., *New Essays on TSL*, CAMBRIDGE UP, 1985

Michael Bell, "Arts of Deception: Hawthorne, 'Romance', and *TSL*"

39. "Dim.'s final confession, for all of its apparent sincerity, is also fraught with irony. He casts off imposture, after all, in an elaborately staged *performance*. (...) From beginning to end, it would seem that Dim.'s deception remains self-deception."

David Van Leer, “Hester’s Labyrinth: Transcendental Rhetoric in Puritan Boston”

40. “No amount of clarity about what was actually on Dim.’s chest can indicate what its presence means — let alone address the more important issue of whether his revelation of the mark is sincere or one more form of subtle hypocrisy.”
41. “The narrator is, for the most part, careful to present all readings of Pearl’s hieroglyphic dimension as projections of the characters. (...) Moreover, the characters themselves criticize their tendency to read Pearl as allegory.”
42. “The Puritans, Hes., Dim., and the narrator all, in their different ways, pursue essences — the truth behind the appearance, the meaning behind the signs. Yet Haw. suggests that this whole notion of fundamentalism (...) may be spurious.”
43. “The difficulty arises when people postulate, behind these rules and conventions, an absolute truth that underwrites them.”
44. “Whether or not life is a prison, it is something that must take place within rules and limits — the custom-houses of history, society, and language.”

M. Colacurcio, “‘The Woman’s Own Choice’: Sex, Metaphor, and the Puritan ‘Sources’ of *TSL*”

45. “This study cautiously proposes that one take seriously the suggestion of the first chapter of *TSL* — that its historical world should indeed be regarded as some projected ‘Utopia of human virtue and happiness’.”
46. “Possibly we are to wonder about the fate of the distinctive covenant of marriage in the midst of a society that is, on one side, redundantly overcovenanted already and, on the other, likely to produce prophetic critiques of all merely contractual arrangements.”
47. “[Hes.] has created a problem her peculiar world does not know how to address, let alone solve. (...) Hes. challenges a whole community in an absolutely fundamental way, and the range of inappropriate attitudes (...) reveal the anxiety appropriate to the discovery that some splendid intellectual edifice has been reared on a foundation of murk.”
48. “[Dim.] is consumed by fear that his ‘adultery’ is really a classic case of ‘idolatry’ — that is, that he did once and does still love Hes. more than God, preferring the creature to the creator in the one just definition of the unregenerate will.”
49. “Even as his utopian ‘Model’, Winthrop had implied that law was just like love, that civil combinations were but reflections of that more ideal union of man and woman.”

NORTON CRITICAL EDITION

M. Colacurcio, “Footsteps of Ann Hutchinson”, 1972

50. “[The narrator] feels — with Hes. — that her adultery was, in quality, not entirely evil: the sacred is present along with the sinful; or, less paradoxically, that Hes. has fulfilled her passionate self for the first time in her life. But of course there are no Puritan categories for that ambiguity. (...) The Puritan establishment moves from the *fact* that Hes. *has sinned* to the *conclusion* that she in essence *is sinful*.”

F. Newberry, "Tradition and Disinheritance", 1977

51. "Having led an apparently blameless life in the Old World, Hes. has ironically re-enacted the archetypal fall in the New World."

D. Stouck, "The Surveyor of 'TCH': A Narrator for *TSL*", 1971

52. "'TCH' opens with two preliminary paragraphs wherein the narrator introduces the problems of alienation and responsibility central both to the introduction and the romance."

Roy Male, "Transformations: Hester and Arthur", 1957

53. "To 'be true', as [*TSL*'s] moral indicates, one must also 'utter', make plain, 'show freely' to others the secret of [one's] identity. (...) Most of the garments in the book are accurate reflections of character."

SYLVIE MATHÉ, "THE READER MAY NOT CHOOSE: OXYMORON AS CENTRAL FIGURE IN HAWTHORNE'S STRATEGY OF IMMUNITY FROM CHOICE IN *TSL*", PENN STATE UP, 1992

54. "Inviting interpretation, the novel simultaneously prevents it, refusing to yield a univocal solution to the enigma it has created."
55. "The unreliability subsumed in the Preface is soon discovered to be the hallmark of the narrator's stance throughout the romance itself."
56. "The distancing effect produced by the historical gap (...) induces a mix of registers. (...) This rhetorical medley, which underlines the shiftiness and inconsistency of the narrative voice, can only work to perplex the reader by making him lose his bearings."
57. "The multifaceted meanings grafted on the letter A, in a wide-ranging scope where the pivotal one, Adulteress, is withheld while other metaphoric ones are spelled out (...) blur the hermeneutic search and indirectly points to the impossibility of any certainty in the ultimate significance of the cipher."
58. "If indirection is upheld as principle of conduct as well as of writing, misdirection, or the art of fallacious directions, is the controlling device within the narrative itself."
59. "The narrator's directives (...) raise the problem of the legitimacy of choice when facing equally plausible yet contradictory alternatives. (...) Reader response then becomes the key issue of *TSL*. (...) The reader becomes solely responsible for the grist he brings to the mill of the tale."
60. "... a novel whose fundamental concern is the Calvinist legacy of the mystery of signs."
61. "Haw.'s impervious resistance to the siren song of Manichaeism surfaces in the rejection of exclusion and the refusal of reduction which he inscribes in his text."