Nathaniel Hawthorne's Tales: Authoritative Texts, Backgrounds, Criticism

Nathaniel Hawthorne; James McIntosh
"Criticism" provides a comprehensive overview of the critical commentary on the novel from its publication to the present. Among the twenty-seven critics represented are Herman Melville, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Henry James, Nina Baym, Eric Sundquist, Richard H. Millington, Alan Trachtenberg, Amy Schrager Lang, and Christopher Castiglia. The overall theme of Hawthorne's novels was a deep concern with ethical problems of sin, punishment, and atonement. No one novel demonstrated that more vividly than The Scarlet Letter. This tale about the adulterous Puritan Hester Prynne is regarded as Hawthorne's best work and is a classic of American literature. Other famous novels written by Hawthorne include The House of Seven Gables and The Blithedale Romance. Nathaniel Hawthorne (/ˈhɛθɔrni; né Hathorne; July 4, 1804 – May 19, 1864) was an American novelist, dark romantic, and short story writer. His works often focus on history, morality, and religion. He was born in 1804 in Salem, Massachusetts, to Nathaniel Hathorne and the former Elizabeth Clarke Manning. His ancestors include John Hathorne, the only judge involved in the Salem witch trials who never repented of his actions. He entered Bowdoin College in 1821, was elected to Phi Beta Kappa in 1824. This Norton Critical Edition of The Blithedale Romance is based on the Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, widely considered the best available edition. It is accompanied by explanatory annotations to help readers with Hawthorne's many historical and literary references as well as with other possible sources of difficulty in the text. "Contexts" is thematically organized and includes a rich and varied selection of materials, both public and private, focusing on Hawthorne's inspirations for the novel.
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