

Flip This House: Caroline Emmerton's Activist Hermeneutics and *The House of the Seven Gables*

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ABSTRACT

This article argues that the House of the Seven Gables Settlement Association and its founder, Caroline Emmerton, are surprisingly iconoclastic reinterpreters of Nathaniel Hawthorne. Drawing on evidence from Emmerton's archives at the House Museum and the reprinting history of *The House of the Seven Gables*, Mitchell Edwards recovers Emmerton's work as a literary critic and documents the museum's role as a forum for public criticism. To make a place for Hawthorne in the settlement movement of the early twentieth century, Emmerton puts the author to political work in service of her vision of the "sociological" value of the novel as a genre—even as such a move destabilizes Hawthorne's authoritative categorization of his work as a romance. The article finally suggests that Emmerton's activist hermeneutics—a genre of engaged interpretation outside the structures of professional criticism—anticipates trends toward political relevance in American criticism both near to her time and our own.

KEYWORDS

The House of the Seven Gables, literary tourism, settlement movement, romance, the canon

So our criticism, from age to age, will reflect the things that the age demands . . .

—T. S. Eliot, *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*

The social significance of the house predominates in the critical history of *The House of the Seven Gables*, acting as both an iconic representation of property value and convenient shorthand for the question of setting.

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In Walter Benn Michaels's influential reading, real estate is both the central topos and material unconscious of Hawthorne's attempt to "domesticate the social dislocation of the 1840s and 1850s" (179). Hawthorne uses the multigenerational history of the Pyncheon mansion to mobilize a fantasy of "clear and unobstructed title," imagining a form of property distributed according to moral character rather than claimed by labor or "appropriated by some capitalist trick" (157, 165–66). By contrast, William Gleason has taken the confluence of "romance and real estate" rather more literally, reading the architectural interventions of the House of the Seven Gables Museum against the romance itself. Turning from property relations to the politics of race and immigration, Gleason finds the book "surprisingly open to a polyglot future" compared to the museum's "idealization of an American past" (21). For both Michaels and Gleason, the text performs what Fredric Jameson famously calls an "imaginary resolution of a real contradiction"—a symbolic act of reconciliation that social reality cannot accommodate (77). This article aims instead to historicize the political *uses* of *The House of the Seven Gables* rather than its political unconscious. In short, I argue that the House of the Seven Gables Settlement Association and its founder Caroline Emmerton are determined and surprisingly iconoclastic reinterpreters of Hawthorne. Rather than represent the writer and his work in his own terms, Emmerton puts Hawthorne to political work in service of her vision of the "sociological" value of the novel as a genre. Emmerton used the House of the Seven Gables Museum to develop an *activist hermeneutics*, a genre of engaged interpretation outside the structures of professional criticism.

The Turner-Ingersoll Mansion and *The House of the Seven Gables* have assumed a complex paratextual relationship since the founding of the Museum and Settlement Association in 1908. The house and the book are two linked components of a composite cultural text—and it is precisely that text that Caroline Emmerton repeatedly reinterprets in the early twentieth century. Emmerton's reconstruction of the house took up an aesthetic debate about romance and realism, which Hawthorne's preface to the book triangulates around the question of the local. Under Emmerton's influence, reprintings of the book launched a quiet revolution in its interpretation, realizing a more local—even realist or "sociological"—vision of the book. Other revisionary cultural activities—like the dramatic adaptations of *The House of the Seven Gables* she penned for performance at the Settlement

Association—would consolidate Emmerton’s Hawthorne, infusing the book with “settlement sociology” and revising the story’s ending to suit the class politics of her settlement work.

This article is structured around three fronts on which these rereadings took place: tourist experiences, bibliographical representations, and museum programming. My analysis considers accounts of the house from tourists and Emmerton herself, tracks the shifting peritexts and bibliographical evidence from the book’s various editions, and draws on my research in Emmerton’s papers and unpublished essays in the archives of the House Museum. The complex public life that the book and house lead together involves both components of the “paratext” as Gérard Genette defines it: its “peritext,” the enveloping material that “presents” the text for reception, and its “epitext,” the various discourses that constitute reception itself (1–3).¹ Genette’s prominent use of an architectural metaphor to describe paratexts as “thresholds of interpretation” is all the more suggestive in the case of *The House of the Seven Gables*. Its paratexts shuttle readers and visitors across that “threshold” in both directions, from book to house and back.

By examining the intertwined history of the book and museum, I show that Emmerton’s management of the House of the Seven Gables Museum was neither an eccentric misreading of Hawthorne nor a more troubling reactionary investment in a Puritan cultural heritage. The former evaluation of Emmerton condescends to her project, denying its serious intentions; the latter underestimates Emmerton’s relation to various forms of cultural criticism that originate within the American Left. By enlisting Hawthorne in the cause of Progressive Era social reform, Emmerton anticipates trends in American criticism both near to and far from her time. These include the search for a “usable past” that guided the likes of Van Wyck Brooks and the Cultural Front in the first decades of the twentieth century and the like-minded pursuit of politically relevant literary studies that continues in our own day. The example of the House Museum suggests that there is a more diffuse, and indeed more *public*, history of American literature and criticism out there for us to recognize. It is within this history that I locate Caroline Emmerton’s activist hermeneutics. Ultimately, though, Emmerton’s mode of critical engagement is remarkable for that which is most unfamiliar: the creation of a “relevant” Hawthorne through activist practice.

RENOVATING THE ROMANCE

The author of *The House of the Seven Gables* famously wants his romance to be set purely in the realm of the imagination. Hawthorne's preface to the first edition frames the narrative in now-familiar terms, theorizing the romance as a genre "mingle[d] [with] the Marvellous" and situated at some remove from the mundane reality of local social life (*CE* 2:1). However, Hawthorne's claim to a locationless romanticism is contested and reworked as the Turner-Ingersoll Mansion becomes a literary landmark, visited by the general public and famous writers alike. Literary pilgrims like Henry James and museum owners like Caroline Emmerton use the mansion to rethink Hawthorne's reputation and even retheorize the purpose of fiction as such.

The House of the Seven Gables is a rich subject for these later appropriations because Hawthorne himself links the value of the work to the way it navigates a sense of place. The preface continues its defense of romance (defined against the novel) by distancing Hawthorne from his local materials of inspiration. Anticipating the interest which would drive readers to Salem, Hawthorne warns:

The Reader may perhaps choose to assign an actual locality to the imaginary events of this narrative. If permitted by the historical connection, (which, though slight, was essential to his plan,) the Author would very willingly have avoided anything of this nature. Not to speak of other objections, it exposes the Romance to an inflexible and exceedingly dangerous species of criticism, by bringing his fancy-pictures almost into positive contact with the realities of the moment. (*CE* 2:3)

To insist on strict mimesis—the book's fidelity to the "realities of the moment"—would miscategorize *The House of the Seven Gables* as a novel of common experience, rather than a romance with more "latitude, both as to its fashion and material" (*CE* 2:1). Reading this text as a novel of Salem life might also offend Hawthorne's erstwhile neighbors in that city—and indeed, several irate Massachusetts Pynchons wrote to the author, feeling that their ancestors had been defamed.² More significantly, though, Hawthorne's gesture toward romance is a foundational move for a tradition of American literary criticism that makes this genre a keystone of the national literature. In this vein of nationalist criticism, the romance is the preeminent example

of a “specific and specifically American genre,” in Nina Baym’s words (426). Twentieth-century critics like Richard Chase would go on to ground the prestige of American literature itself in the romance. Indeed, as Baym shows, Hawthorne’s preface to *The House of the Seven Gables* is essential for Chase’s argument that writers adopted romance *consciously* as an endogenous American form (428).³ The reception of this preface as a general theory of American Romanticism, however, has obscured the problem that prodded Hawthorne toward the language of romance on this specific occasion: the significance of place in *The House of the Seven Gables*. The success or failure of the romance, Hawthorne asserts, depends on a reader looking past the book’s setting. He closes the preface with this point, insisting the book should be “read strictly as a Romance, having a great deal more to do with the clouds overhead, than with any portion of the actual soil of the County of Essex” (CE 2:3).

It is no surprise, then, that before the founding of the museum it was not always a matter beyond dispute that a “House of the Seven Gables” existed at all. The introduction to the 1883 Riverside Edition of *The House of the Seven Gables*, written by George Parsons Lathrop, denies that any house in Salem has claim to verisimilitude, despite the “[h]undreds of pilgrims [who] annually visit” the Turner-Ingersoll Mansion (qtd. in Hawthorne, *House* [Riverside] 10). The authority of the writer is argument enough for Lathrop, who was Hawthorne’s son-in-law. He cites Hawthorne’s contention in the preface that the fictionalized house is made only of “*materials long in use for constructing castles in the air*.”⁴ Lathrop contributes a morsel of family lore to bolster Hawthorne’s case: “More than this, [Hawthorne] stated to persons still living that the house of the romance was not copied from any actual edifice,” but was a pastiche of colonial styles. The reader is reassured that, absent any specific house of inspiration, *The House of the Seven Gables* remains an example of the “liberty of a creative mind,” a romantic heightening of reality rather than “a literal description of something [Hawthorne] had seen” (qtd. in Hawthorne, *House* [Riverside] 11). Lathrop is far from alone in his denial of any “real” version of the house in this period, as the Salem tourist press likewise declined to claim the house. One could still read in the 1892 *Visitor’s Guide to Salem* that “no such house as [Hawthorne] described exists or ever has existed. . . . Yet a house on Turner street is quite often referred to as ‘The House of Seven Gables’” (150).

Even if the house was not universally identified with Hawthorne’s romance in the late nineteenth century, the Upton family, living in the mansion at this time, saw their house become an informal but significant

tourist site. Nailing a sign out front—just a quarter to see the house of romantic fame!—they admitted nearly one thousand visitors annually to tour their home, even selling Hawthornian souvenirs of their own making from a closet in the parlor (Figure 1).⁵ The inclusion of the grounds in the tour doubles down on the Uptons' claim of their home as *the* reference for Hawthorne's romance. This choice implies that the grounds are as significant as the building itself if one wants to correlate a visitor's experience with the book. After all, what is *The House of the Seven Gables* without its garden scenes? The great "Pyncheon-elm" might be spotted on these grounds; Clifford is gradually "revived from the chill torpor of his life" by Phoebe's energetic readings of novels and poems in their "secluded garden-spot" (CE 2:147); Holgrave's crucial renunciation of his own mesmeric "mastery" over Phoebe takes place in the same garden (CE 2:212). Even if there would have been only three gables for visitors to count at this time—Emmerton would later "restore" the others—the Uptons nonetheless staked their claim against the dismissals of a "real" House of the Seven Gables by Hawthorne himself and guardians of the family legacy like Lathrop.

Though the relationship between house and *House* is clearly a contested matter around the turn of the century, the presence of such unofficial tourism created ripples in the culture of Hawthorne admiration. The site invited some visitors to reconsider the value of fiction in general. Henry James, as devoted a Hawthorne disciple as ever was, visited in 1904 while writing *The American Scene*, a travel collection. James came away from this encounter deeply disappointed in the house itself. As he tells it, the "native estimate" around Salem held that the house was something of a "romantic ruin"; he wonders how such a sight might "strike a taste formed for such features by the landscape of Italy" (*American Scene* 265). James is ultimately repelled by the "shapeless object by the waterside" he confronts; fortunately, he feels "troubled" only until he manages to "throw[] off together . . . the poor illusion of a *necessity* of relation between the accomplished thing, for poetry, for art, and those other quite equivocal things that we inflate our ignorance with seeing it suggested by." His elaboration is worth reading in full:

The weak, vague domiciliary presence at the end of the lane may have "been" (in our poor parlance) the idea of the admirable book—though even here we take a leap into dense darkness; but the idea that is the inner force of the admirable book so vividly forgets, before our eyes, any such origin or reference, "cutting" it dead as a low acquaintance and outsoaring the shadow of its night, that the connection has turned

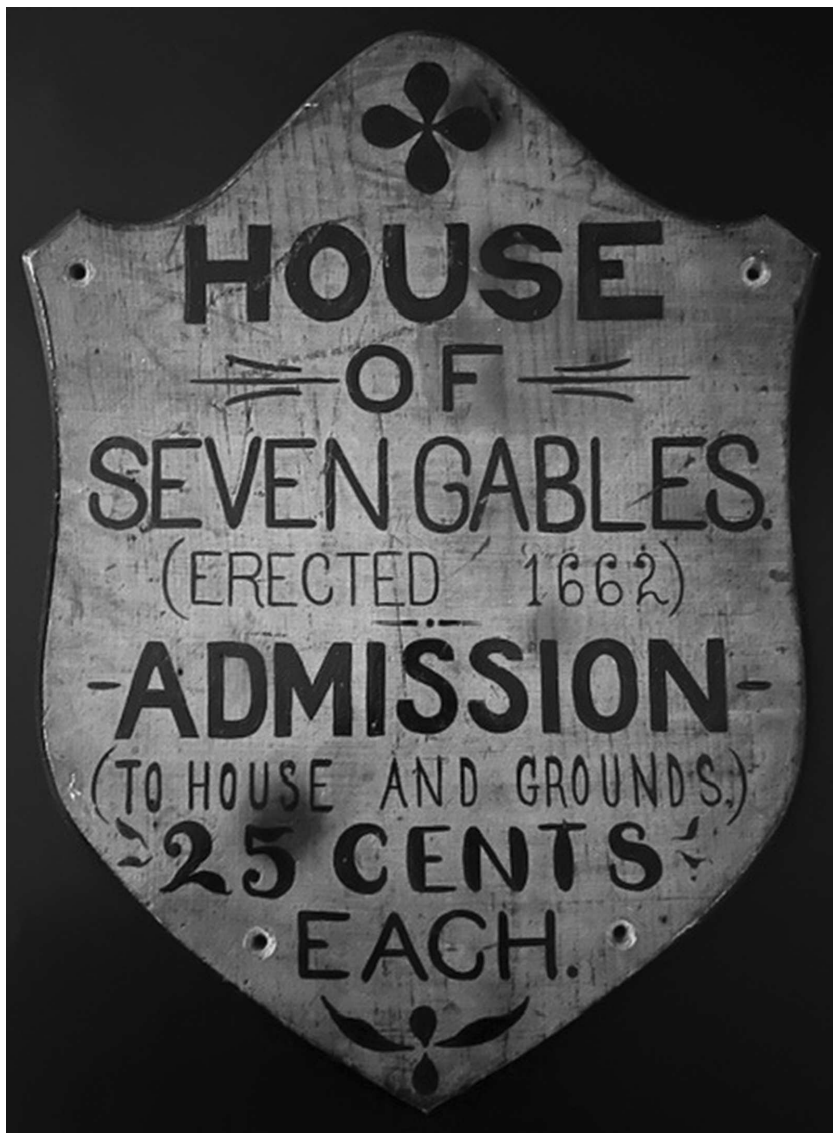


FIGURE 1 Sign used by the Upton family at the Turner-Ingersoll mansion.

a somersault into space, repudiated like a ladder kicked back from the top of a wall. (*American Scene* 271)

Though James is most reverent at first about the “idea that is [the book’s] inner force”—an idea that might well be traced to an evocative house or scrap of local lore rather than the author alone—his account of the visit

resolves into a reflection on “genius.” If we look to “set our critical feet” on “Hawthorne’s ladder” and revisit the origins of *The House of the Seven Gables*, he concludes, we learn “how merely ‘subjective’ in us are our discoveries about genius” (*American Scene* 271). The visitor who hopes to see the artwork’s “origin or reference” either catches a glimpse of an image which the genius “swallow[s]” by transforming it into art—rendering the source of inspiration a pale comparison to the “accomplished thing”—or he recognizes no valid source whatsoever (272).⁶ If the novel is to stand comparison to the fine arts of poetry and painting, James implies, we must learn to recognize a species of genius in this repudiation of any “origin or reference.”⁷

Walter Benn Michaels rightly observes that James’s reading of the house here restates Hawthorne’s own original preface (156). But this is repetition with a difference, as James rephrases Hawthorne in terms that legitimate his own aesthetic projects. The “inner force” that forgets its “origin or reference” plainly echoes Hawthorne’s sense of the romance as a genre with an aversion to “actual locality” (*American Scene* 271; *CE* 2:3). However, the important element for James is that Hawthorne elevates his materials not with a mingling of the “Marvellous” but through the aestheticizing gaze of the genius. James’s trip to Hawthorne’s site of inspiration, in other words, does not lead back to Hawthorne’s theory of romance, but sends James further on the road to an evolving theory of Jamesian realism. Accordingly, James theorizes the work of the novelist in architectural terms just a few years after this visit. The Preface to the 1908 New York Edition of *The Portrait of a Lady* likens the “consciousness of the artist” to an individual spectator peering out from one of “million[s]” of windows in the “house of fiction” (1:x–xi). James’s idealized house of fiction is in part a rebuttal to what he sees in the house on Turner Street: setting, a sense of specific place, as inert material which the novelist’s individual perspective transforms. Thus, the “house of fiction” is a metaphor which reinforces “point of view” as fiction’s premier value. For Hawthorne, liberation from local context licenses his marvelous flights of romantic fancy; for James, the local becomes one more base material that the ambitious novelist alchemizes into literary gold.

Henry James’s clarifying encounter with the Turner-Ingersoll Mansion is worthy of attention because his model of appropriation-by-appreciation makes James an unlikely analogue to Caroline Emmerton, who would purchase the mansion shortly after *The American Scene* was published. Hawthorne’s and James’s navigation of aesthetic conflicts through *The House of the Seven Gables*—their theories of literary value that similarly reject the “reality” of place—is an essential context for the reconstruction of the

historical site as a museum. Emmerton would open this museum not as a quaint local attraction or commercial venture but as a careful intervention in this debate about the aesthetic (and, as we shall see, political) value of the local as a point of reference for literary interpretation. Like James, Emmerton interprets the relationship between *The House of the Seven Gables* and the mansion to suit her purposes. Her “house of fiction,” however, would fling wide its doors, opening the institution among the tenements and immigrant social organizations of “Little Poland” in Salem’s Derby Waterfront District.⁸

Emmerton purchased the three-gabled house on Turner Street in 1908 to expand the footprint of a newly opened Settlement Association operating out of a decommissioned sailors’ church across the street. She helped establish Salem’s equivalent to Jane Addams’s famed Hull House in Chicago, where Addams set out to “extend democracy beyond its political expression” and directly intervene in the material and social well-being of the (mostly white) working class (Addams 2). Operating the house as a museum would fund a typical array of settlement activities: social work, English language classes, cultural events, handcraft training, and more. Settlement workers—usually educated and wealthy women like Emmerton—lived in the house and coordinated settlement work for newly arrived immigrants in Salem, mostly from Poland, Italy, and Ukraine in the early twentieth century.

To give Hawthorne a role in this social-democratic “uplift” culture, Emmerton crafts a tour experience that conflates local reference and artistic representation. Her efforts close the aestheticized distance that garnered James’ praise, making sure that the house remains firmly attached to rather than “repudiated” by the book. This requires two mutually reinforcing projects: restoring the House of the Seven Gables in alignment with the novel and repackaging the novel to align with the house. A credible Hawthorne museum would have to be more serious than a lived-in home with a cabinet of curiosities for sale. Consequently, Emmerton restores the structure to its seventeenth-century exterior and nineteenth-century interior, realizing in architectural terms the drama of the past’s “overhang” in the present that is so central to Hawthorne’s pageant of Pyncheons and Maules.

Emmerton’s museum recreated a version of the house that Hawthorne never experienced, nonetheless framing it as a local resource on which his fiction was based. When the romancer visited the building as the home of his cousin Susannah Ingersoll, only three of its original seven gables

remained (Emmerton, *Chronicles* 23). Emmerton paraphrases traditional lore when she writes of Susannah and Nathaniel's "long talks" on "bygone times," leading naturally to the "story of how Miss Ingersoll's utilitarian father took off the gables" (24). Horace Conolly, Susannah's adopted son, recorded this encounter as an immediate epiphany that spurred Hawthorne to write. In a now-lost (possibly dubious) letter transcribed by Conolly, Hawthorne wrote after one of his regular visits: "[Susannah] said it has had in the history of its changes and alterations Seven Gables. The expression was new and struck me very forcibly; I think I shall make something of it" (*CE* 15:456).⁹ No matter how Hawthorne came to know of the house's previous gables, though, his description of the house in *The House of Seven Gables* is an imaginative projection of this architectural past—more of an "artist's rendition" than recollection of experience.

Though the founder hires an architect with a reputation for "scientific" Colonial Revival restorations, in many cases Hawthorne's fictionalized description provides as much of a blueprint as the house's architectural past.¹⁰ Despite Emmerton's restraint in some instances (notably choosing *not* to build Clifford's arched window, despite a desire to do so), the novel's representation of the house haunts these renovations (Gleason 2–3). Some features extrapolate from a rather slight basis in the house's history, placing the visitor in the book: they walk through Hepzibah's cent-shop, visit "Clifford's room," and so on.¹¹ This is a much more comprehensive version of the Upton family's earlier attempt to situate the visitor in the fictional narrative as they tour the home.

Sometimes, though, Emmerton's House of the Seven Gables Museum uses traces of its architectural past to reread the book. Emmerton adds a "secret staircase" wrapping around the central chimney (or restores it, if you credit a former owner's story that he previously found and filled in the staircase), which explains Clifford's mysterious appearance in the parlor during Jaffrey Pyncheon's death.¹² In her "chronicle" of the house and its renovations, Emmerton argues that "[t]he question of how Clifford got to the dining room is evaded in the story, but the secret staircase offers a perfect explanation of this" (*Chronicles* 38). Though we might read the staircase as a sensationalizing addition in line with a sense of romantic mystery, this renovation is the foundation for a *realistic* interpretation of Judge Pyncheon's death. Rather than a touch of the inexplicable—Hawthorne's idea of the "Marvellous"—Emmerton asserts that Jaffrey's "stroke of apoplexy"

could have been caused by “seeing Clifford mysteriously appearing from nowhere” (*Chronicles* 38). Emmerton, in other words, frames even her speculative renovations as an explication of *The House of the Seven Gables*.

Emmerton’s renovations and tour experiences contribute to the sense that the museum is at once a site of fictional reenactment and a writer’s museum. That is, the building is somehow both “the house through which [Hawthorne’s] characters moved,” in her words, and the place in which early tours advertised the “old toaster Hawthorne had many a slice of toast” from (*Chronicles* 36; Gleason 17).¹³ Through both functions, though, Emmerton’s museum insists that the reader-visitor engage with Hawthorne with a highly specific sense of place. Henry James’s “ladder,” it seems, has been carefully rebuilt and reinforced. As Hawthorne himself indicated in the preface, the book’s positioning within the field of fictional genres depends on its being placed within or outside any “actual locality.” Emmerton’s interpretation of *The House of the Seven Gables* gradually recodes the text in terms of a strongly localized realism. For such an interpretation to take root beyond the museum tour, though, the text itself would have to undergo renovations of its own.

ULTERIOR DESIGN: REPRINTING THE SEVEN GABLES

With the museum restructured to fit the book, Emmerton next restructured the book to fit the museum. A 1913 reprint of *The House of the Seven Gables*, Houghton Mifflin’s “Visitors’ Edition,” would soon establish beyond any doubt that the institution on Turner Street was the specific referent and setting of Hawthorne’s narrative. This edition, which was sold in the house gift shop and remains for sale there today in reprinted form, makes the book an extension of the newly opened museum. The publisher’s binding and dust jacket each emulate the book’s frontispiece photograph of the house, newly seven-gabled again (Figure 2). On the cover, though, the house hovers between architectural verisimilitude and streamlined abstraction. It sits in a green field, backed by an impressionistic suggestion of cloud in a sky of unbroken blue. It could be that this depicts the house’s period of colonial isolation, its breathing room in a not-yet-industrial Salem; this cartoonish abstraction threatens to leave contemporary Salem behind, however. The dust jacket deepens this paradox, even more visually abstract but textually localized. As if to write directly against Hawthorne’s assertion in his preface that the book “ha[s] a great deal more to do with the clouds overhead”

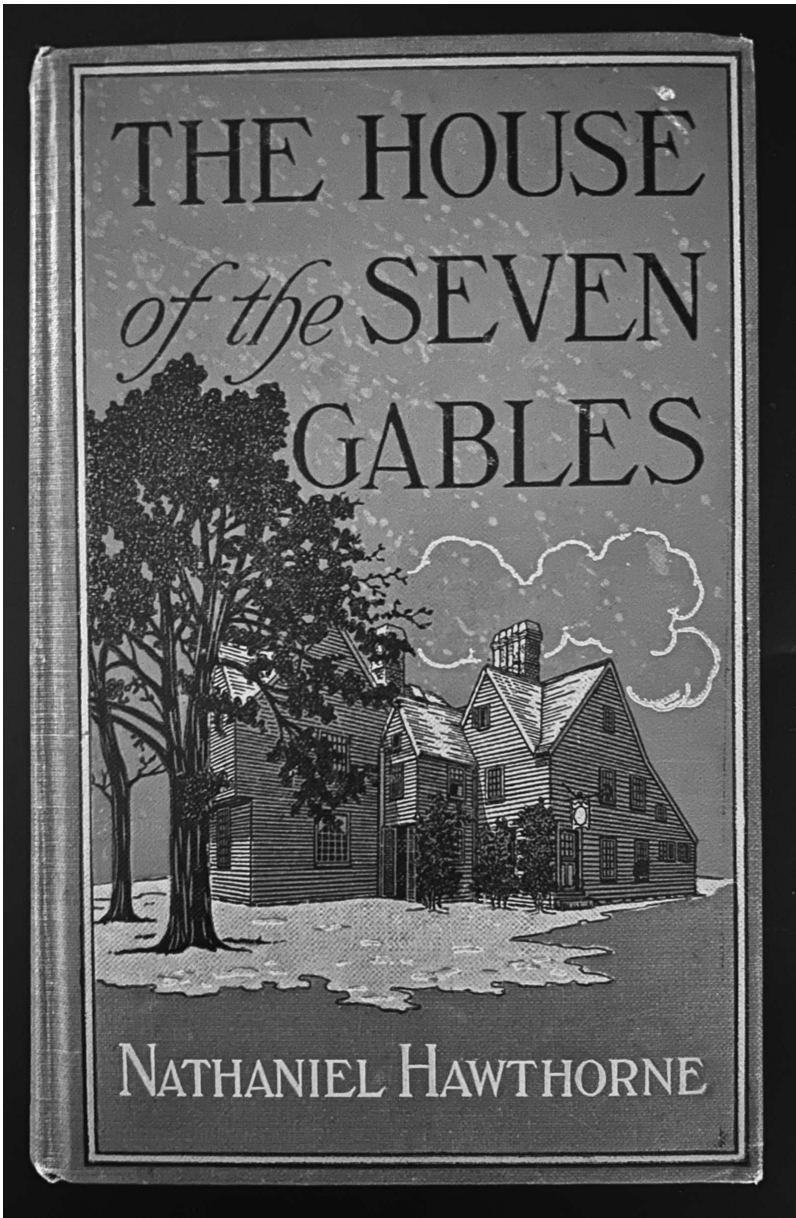


FIGURE 2 Publisher's binding, 1913 Visitors' Edition.

than the county of Essex, the jacket dispenses with the cloud altogether and names the town outright on a two-line subtitle: "Salem | Massachusetts" (CE 2:3; "The House of the Seven Gables").¹⁴ Opening the book suppresses

the paradox, however. If the cover flirts with the abstractions of romance, the frontispiece is grounded in photographic realism. It introduces the house in photorealistic locality, placing it in a real neighborhood with a street, fence, and another house in the background (Hawthorne, *House* [Visitors']).

The prefatory "Note to the Visitors' Edition," written by Emmerton, confirms what the frontispiece only suggests: this house is real, should you like to see it yourself. The "venerable mansion" on Turner Street is "now generally acknowledged as the scene and inspiration of Hawthorne's famous romance," she avers, before giving a condensed history of the building ("Note" 7). Again, this authenticating note undercuts Hawthorne's own paratextual framing of the book, which urged readers against the very associations the Visitors' Edition makes. What might a reader who has just purchased a copy of this book in "Hepzibah's shop" make of Hawthorne's advice against "assign[ing] an actual locality" to it in his own preface sandwiched between Emmerton's note and the narrative itself? Indeed, canny acts of plate-positioning destabilize Hawthorne's preference for placeless romance further: before even arriving at this statement in the preface, the reader must flip through a photograph of Hawthorne's Salem birthplace on an inserted plate between pages 14 and 15.¹⁵ (The birthplace, appropriately enough, was later moved to the House of the Seven Gables complex and has been there since 1958.) Photographs of the museum's "interpretations" of its rooms are likewise interspersed throughout the text, inserted according to narrative relevance: "The Attic" near a description of the gables; "The Shop" pictured across from Hepzibah's torturous transactions in "A Day Behind the Counter"; an image of "Clifford's Room"—the entrance to the "secret staircase" promiscuously ajar—next to Clifford's disappearance during Jaffrey's death. In the Visitors' Edition, all roads lead to Salem—and to specific buildings (even rooms) within it—a far cry from Hawthorne's insistence that this narrative be grounded in no specific "soil."

This is a conspicuous departure from reprintings published before the Museum opened. Collected editions of Hawthorne's works from the turn of the century tend not to focus on the book's local setting in accordance with the author's wishes. The Riverside Edition (1883) that Lathrop introduced devotes its only illustration to a frontispiece drawn from "The Snow Image," one of the short stories with which the novel is packaged. Even an edition with nominal interest in the local like the Old Manse Edition (1904), named for Hawthorne's home in Concord, bears a sketch of an interior scene as the frontispiece rather than the house. Its illustration of the Pyncheon

house—inserted later near an early description of the “stately mansion”—is adorned with pseudo-medieval flourishes on its wood panels, strikingly more Gothic than the house on Turner Street (*House* [Old Manse], 12).

These changes in the house’s paratextual representation across time are not acts of mere decoration, but are significant transformations of what textual scholar Jerome McGann would call the novel’s “bibliographical codes.” For McGann, a text’s meanings are produced by the interaction of its bibliographical codes (the specific features of its realization in one material form) and its linguistic codes (the language inscribed on that form). When those bibliographical codes change, they remake rather than merely reclothe the text (13, 52–53). These variations in material form, he asserts, are as important textual variants as an excised phrase or rewritten line. The Visitors’ Edition of *The House of the Seven Gables* is a case in point: printed from the Riverside Edition’s electrotyped plates, its text exactly reproduces the original typesetting of the 1883 version.¹⁶ Thus, its linguistic codes remain unchanged. Its bibliographical codes, however, radically revise the text’s relationship to its local materials of reference. Book-production processes necessitate that the text’s bibliographical codes are shaped by all sorts of agents other than the author, and that’s certainly the case here, where Hawthorne’s ability to frame his own text is controverted by its presentation.

These tensions over textual authority remain encoded in this book’s materiality in the present, irrupting back into view in the copies currently for sale in the museum gift shop. Each copy of a twenty-first-century reprint of the Visitors’ Edition purchased onsite bears two stamps on the half-title: “Purchased at the House of the Seven Gables” decorated with the house’s roofline, and a facsimile signature of Nathaniel Hawthorne (*House* [Applewood]). At first, all may seem well here: the house’s stamp and Hawthorne’s name cohabitate like two proud signatories on a document of consensus (Figure 3). But on further consideration this looks more like a suspension of competition between two authorities whose conflict is yet ongoing. Behind “Nath’ Hawthorne” lies the weight of an accumulated literary reputation which built itself on the prestige of romance as a genre of the imagination which leaves its materials of inspiration behind; the house stamp aligns the institution against that vision of Hawthorne, interested instead in a mimetic relation to the local as a literary value.

It is no surprise that these shifting textual materialities continue to reflect competing aesthetic values as Hawthorne’s work is revisited over time.

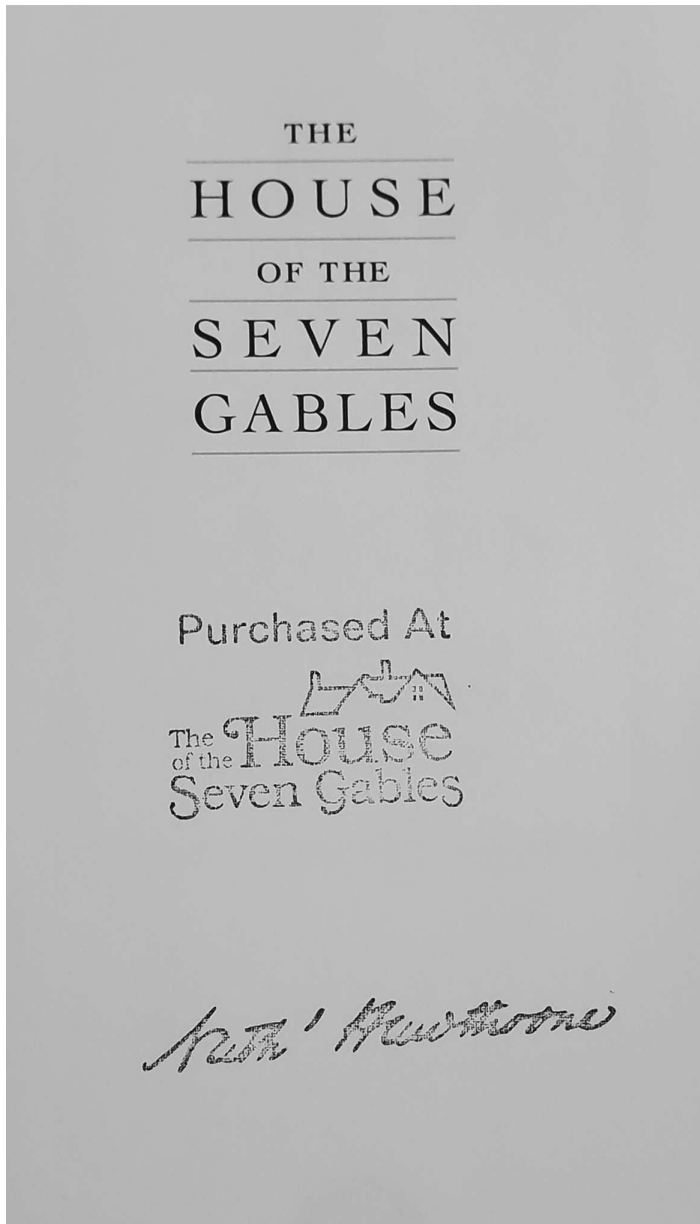


FIGURE 3 Half-title, Applewood Books reprint of Visitors' Edition.

As Richard Brodhead shows, Hawthorne's material forms have long been a rich metonym for the notion of an American literary tradition in general. A post-Civil War admirer like Hamlin Garland develops a "worshipful

admiration” of Hawthorne by reading him in those editions “which can always be had in sets at very low prices” (Garland 219). Decades later, Brodhead observes, that “same standard-author set of Hawthorne” looks like “so much musty furniture” to the younger critic Randolph Bourne (Brodhead 204). Hawthorne himself even theorizes his aesthetic experiments in similarly charged bibliographic terms: a strictly realist account of the Pyncheon history threatens to “fill a bigger folio volume, or a longer series of duodecimos, than could prudently be appropriated to the annals of all New England, during a similar period” (*CE* 2:6). Consequently, *House*’s narrator “reconceive[s] [narrative] as a mode of abridgement,” in Meredith McGill’s terms (236).

Against these specters of bibliographical failure—the collected Hawthorne behind the dusty glass of tradition, on the one hand, and the “longer series of duodecimos” that symbolize a realism of the everyday on the other—the Visitors’ Edition reimagines *The House of the Seven Gables* as a volume of social realism, situated within a network of institutions and ideologies which reimagine the American canon for progressive social reform. The incessant localism of the Visitors’ Edition is not just a ploy to drum up business for the museum or a return to “local color” fiction—it is a transformation of the text’s genre.¹⁷ Echoing the tourist experience of the House Museum, the Visitors’ Edition presents a version of the book that challenges Hawthorne’s sense of romance: in the author’s own terms, to locate this book irrefutably in Salem is to complicate its generic identity as a romance. If the book is not a romance, then, it is open to new forms of aesthetic and political reappropriation. Emmerton relocates Hawthorne within her settlement milieu, linking the book to a politics of local social work rather than the nationalist ambitions that the romance represents for later critics like Richard Chase. While her defense of the museum’s architectural verisimilitude takes up much of her prefatory note to the novel, Emmerton maintains that the “settlement work” triggered by the “influx of foreigners” in industrial Salem is the actual motivation behind her purchase of the site (“Note” 9).

Emmerton’s efforts should underscore her function as literary critic as well as settlement founder. While Emmerton did not hold a college degree, she had the belletristic learning of a privately educated bourgeois woman. Her papers at the House Museum document a wide-ranging literary interest. Essays written for a women’s social debate club cover topics as varied as G. K. Chesterton’s ethics (she doesn’t like them), a modern revival in

Spanish literature (it may herald the rebirth of Spain's intellectual culture), and the social value of "enormous" periodical circulation (it merits a qualified optimism) (Emmerton, *Essays*).¹⁸ Her most sustained piece of traditional criticism—an essay on "the value of the sociological novel"—sheds substantial new light on her revisions of *The House of the Seven Gables*.

Emmerton's essay praises Upton Sinclair, Edith Wharton, and other "sociological" novelists whose works "picture present conditions" to "point[] out . . . that something is fundamentally wrong with the social structure" ("What Is the Value of the Sociological Novel?" 1, 7). The "sociological novel" is a supple category for Emmerton, encompassing more than literary naturalism: it reaches back to the social problem novel of the nineteenth century. Still, *Vanity Fair*, she asserts, cannot be said to be properly sociological given that Thackeray "made his plea for individual rather than collective action." Those salutary forms of "collective action" include more politically radical and institutionally specific aims; Emmerton rues that Thackeray "advocated no change in social institutions, such as the abolition of the House of Lords or a fairer distribution of wealth" (2).

The "sociological novel" that takes hyper-specific aim at social institutions and political arrangements could not be any further from what Hawthorne wants *House* to be. (Recall his warning not to put the book "in positive contact with the realities of the moment.") Yet the Visitors' Edition bends the novel toward such a genre. It literally "pictures" the House of the Seven Gables' present condition in its photographic illustrations and gives its specific setting a political valence, pointedly reminding of its ongoing role in the settlement movement.

Emmerton's admiring description of a genre that is not just "social" but "sociological" is a crucial indicator of the intention behind her localization of Hawthorne. This aesthetic category articulates a literary logic for "settlement sociology," the system of social theory that underpinned settlement work. In fact, this body of social theory was elaborated *through* settlement work as a form of activist research before the practice of sociology became primarily based in universities (Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley 5). The "central problematic" of settlement sociology was "the need to reconstitute connection" in the social world; "neighborly relation" became a key focus of that project (14, 17). Emmerton's unique contribution to settlement sociology is her turn to literary tourism and related cultural programming as a route to this "neighborly relation." She would continue to draw on *The House of the Seven Gables* to "reconstitute connection" by putting on public

performances adapted from the book. This is the way that she approached the “collective” form she praises in the “sociological novel,” even as her adaptations leave fiction behind for drama.

CANON REFORM

The Visitors’ Edition is an admittedly incomplete realization of Emmerton’s “sociological” version of *The House of the Seven Gables*, massaged into shape by its paratexts. Revisionist settlement activities—a principle site of “neighborly relation”—pick up where this edition leaves off, continuing to piece together a socially conscious Hawthorne. Perhaps the most radical of these is “Scenes from the House of the Seven Gables,” a dramatic adaptation of the novel written by Caroline Emmerton around 1920 and performed for the settlement’s benefit. Existing in multiple drafts and versions, “Scenes” advises in one typescript that it not be considered a full “dramatization,” merely a “much simplified” adaptation of the story (“Scenes”). Yet as McGill observes, Hawthorne himself recognizes abridgment as a form of aesthetic transformation; Emmerton’s abridgments and outright rewritings deserve the close attention that her caveats deflect. Some revisions continue to construct a version of the plot that squares with Emmerton’s architectural restorations and tour experiences. During the first of three acts, which covers the novel’s first chapter on the building of the house and the origins of the Maule curse, Colonel Pyncheon asks his builder Thomas Maule whether the secret staircase is “quite complete and properly disguised” (“Scenes” 2).¹⁹ In Emmerton’s retelling, the missing deed to the Pyncheons’ fabled “Indian claim” in Maine hides in the staircase she “restored,” rather than behind the Colonel’s portrait.

This is but a small change compared to Emmerton’s revised ending of Hawthorne’s tale. Naturally quite sympathetic to Holgrave, who runs around with “reformers, temperance lecturers, and all manner of cross-looking philanthropists” like herself, Emmerton expunges the daguerreotypist’s infamous renunciation of his radical tendencies at the end of the novel (*CE* 2:84). In Hawthorne’s ending, the timely deaths of Jaffrey Pyncheon and his far-off son secure the remaining Pyncheons a windfall of capital and a country estate. Holgrave has just proven his fitness for Phoebe Pyncheon’s hand by promising to leave those “banditti-like associates” behind and “conform [him]self to laws, and the peaceful practice of society”—an ironic reversal for this erstwhile “sworn foe of wealth and all manner of

conservatism" (*CE* 2:307, 313).²⁰ The book's conservative resolution, which mollifies Holgrave's radicalism through property accumulation, continues to vex critics.²¹

Not so in Emmerton's "Scenes," which still ends in this Maule-Pyncheon rapprochement but leaves the issue of Holgrave's radicalism untouched. Instead, Emmerton's Holgrave disentangles the question of familial *ressentiment* from his critique of property, renouncing vengeance (like that of his ancestor against Alice Pyncheon, shown in Act II) without voluntarily submitting to the propertied status quo. Rather than converting from eccentric radical to comfortable bourgeois, Emmerton's Holgrave overcomes *both* the Maules' mesmeric revenge and "Pyncheon pride and avrice [*sic*]" (Untitled script). The story's walking embodiment of Pyncheon avarice is, of course, the apoplectic Jaffrey, but the implication here is that the novel's original ending sees Holgrave come under that avarice's more subtle sway even as all tension seems resolved. The play's resolution has almost nothing to do with property at all; Jaffrey's off-stage son, it seems, has been spared. There is no inheritance for the Pyncheons, who by all indications remain at the House of the Seven Gables in perpetuity. Emmerton may not completely transform *House* into a Sinclair-esque "sociological novel," but in acts of reinterpretation—even creative misreading—like "Scenes," she eliminates aspects of the plot which would create friction between the political goals of the settlement and Hawthorne's narrative. In one draft's prologue to the final act, Holgrave is practically Emmerton's model for the Settlement Association's idealized subject, an example of the Maule family's "virtuous development" over time.²² It is striking that her adaptation works through the very same issues that literary critics continue to raise regarding the ending of the novel.

Emmerton's activist hermeneutics are only recognizable here if we are willing to look for critical engagement in unexpected places. This is as true in the less obvious cases (tour guide interpretations, paratextual framings) as it is in the most manifest (wholesale reinventions like the play). This appropriation of an American classic for new political purposes places Emmerton in a specific critical context to which she and the Museum have never been connected: among the so-called Young American critics of the early twentieth century. Emmerton's choice of Hawthorne as a figure of reclamation is important here, as his standing in the new century is closely linked to the emergence of this critical movement. At the time of James's visit to and Emmerton's purchase of the house, Hawthorne's reputation was

entering its most contested juncture since his death in 1864. Hawthorne had taken his place as the preeminent novelist in the American canon in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In American literary culture's nationalizing (and nationalist) phase, this canon was marked more than ever by its institutional standardization: taught in primary schools, studied in universities, stocked in rapidly proliferating public libraries, figures like Hawthorne attained not just aesthetic value but *official* status in the literary field.²³ Though Hawthorne may be "[t]he only major American author never to have been underestimated," Richard Brodhead argues that the romancer's spot on every bookshelf made him vulnerable to criticism when the nineteenth century gave way to the twentieth (51).

Early in the new century, restless critical "moderns" like Van Wyck Brooks, Waldo Frank, Randolph Bourne, and Lewis Mumford staged a revolt against the influence of America's official culture. Brooks, for example, charged that no amount of Thoreau, Emerson, Poe, or Hawthorne had "the power to move the soul of America from the accumulation of dollars," despite their apparent alienation from the grasping logic of capital (*America's Coming-of-Age* 44). How could any American student read such authors in school and still throw themselves into the machinery of big business after graduation? In Brodhead's reading, Brooks exemplifies a larger generational turn against literature's separation from "practical" spheres of experience. Hawthorne and company had been academicized at the hands of literature professors captured by the very culture of professionalized commerce their canonical authors decry (Brodhead 210).²⁴ It was the academy's fault, this line of thinking holds, that the polished marble busts of Hawthorne and Poe had smoothed down their most subversive features.

Brodhead identifies these Young Americans as the United States' first "canon-reformers." "Reform" pulls double duty here, though: while they certainly intended to elect some new literary representatives, more importantly the critics in this group counted on a reconstructed version of the canon as a regenerative force in social and political life. Brooks, for example, thought a reinvigorated American literature could be a tool for proper "acculturation" to an anticapitalist life of the mind (Brodhead 202-3).²⁵ If we liberate the American canon from its stultifying official "gloss," Brooks asks, what might a radically reimagined "usable past" look like?

Such a past would require two interrelated critical moves: one, brushing away the writers least hospitable to this vision (Longfellow, sentimentalists, "local colorists"); two, rescuing the most vital ones from

institutional misinterpretation or undue obscurity.²⁶ Hawthorne would eventually come out of this turbulence unscathed, as his enduring position in the American canon makes clear, but he would not emerge unchanged. For Brooks and later critics in this generation, the romancer could land on either side of these emerging divides; he remained a Puritan stodger to some, an emblem of veiled subversion to others. D. H. Lawrence, for instance, saw in Hawthorne the preeminent example of American literary “subterfuge,” a staid surface belied by roiling depths (Brodhead 9).²⁷ These contrary readings of Hawthorne—as furrow-browed moral scold, as secret radical—suggest that the literary field dynamically reproduces itself by such acts of counterintuition, iconoclasm, and brash reappropriation. We find an unexpected example of such revisionism in Caroline Emmerton’s House of the Seven Gables Museum and Settlement Association—precisely the kind of para-academic critical work Brooks and friends might praise as the balm to a canon stultified by its circulation in the official institutions of literature. Furthermore, Emmerton’s interventions began before the most prominent works of Brooks, Frank, and Mumford were published—and the domestic, feminized work at this intersection of settlement movement and house museum overturns the overwhelmingly masculine character of this canon-reformation in the 1910s and 1920s.

Though the method of Emmerton’s (re)presentation of *The House of the Seven Gables* is unorthodox, her choice of Hawthorne for the task is intuitive. Hawthorne’s role as a cultural weathervane is well known: the central thesis of Brodhead’s reputation study is that the changing fortunes and values of American culture through the nineteenth century can be traced with particular vividness in Hawthorne (10–11). Likewise, McGill argues with conviction that *House*’s competing modes of narration track the massive shift from the “culture of reprinting” to a nationalist, author-centered literary culture, as Hawthorne “self-refashion[s]” to exploit this emerging system of values (218–19). Emmerton’s own refashioning of Hawthorne updates this novel’s barometric relation to the literary field around it, marking once again the stakes of such shifts in literary culture. The central issues in her uses of Hawthorne—the relationship between the American canon and political radicalism, the role of public culture in socializing this anemic democracy—also anticipate the next major shift in American cultural politics, the rise in the 1930s of what Michael Denning calls the “Cultural Front.”²⁸ This is a logical conclusion of Emmerton’s status as a lost Young American critic; Brooks, Frank, and Mumford would eventually all become active in Cultural

Front organizations, having been early critics of the same “official” US culture that the Cultural Front would utterly transform (Denning 446). Two core Front strategies parallel Emmerton’s efforts. First, members of the Cultural Front organized social-democratic takeovers of public-facing cultural institutions.²⁹ Second, the Cultural Front’s organizers and artists would become well-known for reappropriating icons of the nineteenth century with a new “radical edge” (Denning 130–31). Instead of the usual suspects in Lincoln or John Brown, perhaps Caroline Emmerton’s Hawthorne is an early entry in this series.

What would it mean for scholarship to recognize Caroline Emmerton and the House of the Seven Gables Museum as transformative interpreters of Nathaniel Hawthorne? For one thing, the founder’s early contribution to social-democratic public culture complicates critical evaluations of the Museum’s putative conservatism. William Gleason, for example, compares the novel’s internal representations of race and immigration with Emmerton’s settlement work, finding that Hawthorne harbors a surprising melting-pot sensibility—one that is “a far more progressive take than Emmerton’s own” (21). That is, where Emmerton wants to “Americanize” immigrants, the New England blueblood Clifford Pyncheon longs to be dissolved into the surging multiethnic mass in the street below.³⁰ To describe Emmerton’s vision of “Americanization,” though, Gleason only touts her connection to the Colonial Revival movement through architect Joseph Chandler, whom she hired to restore the house (17). Gleason is convincing on the reactionary conception of cultural heritage behind this movement; indeed, if Colonial Revival were the only ideological context behind the Museum and Settlement Association, his evaluation of Emmerton would be quite justified. However, if we recognize that Emmerton’s wider interpretive project is linked to settlement sociology and Young American canon reform, this “Americanization” is far harder to characterize in exclusively conservative terms.

In my view, Emmerton is more invested in the society-remaking political purpose of American literature than the Colonial Revival. In the context of the early-twentieth-century canon wars, it looks very much like Emmerton, in fact, is the figure urging Hawthorne to “take the plunge” that his Clifford fantasizes about, putting literature to work in the name of on-the-ground activism.³¹ Ironically, by recovering a “progressive” Hawthorne through a rereading of *The House of the Seven Gables*, Gleason takes part in the very history of reappropriation that his interpretation of the museum denies.

Furthermore, Emmerton's acts of public criticism undermine any interpretation of the museum as a crass commercialization of Hawthorne's genius. (That is, as merely a more robust version of the Hawthorniana in the Upton family parlor.) Indeed, as McGill demonstrates, there is no pre-commercial Hawthorne to be corrupted here—and it's particularly appropriate that *The House of the Seven Gables* is the book in question, given that in its very narrative structure the author tries to obscure his own early-career commercial work in the hopes of transcending it, exorcising the ghosts of lowbrow genres past.³² By contrast, Emmerton seems much more invested in conscripting Hawthorne for radical social change, placing him at the center of a public humanities project marked by its Progressive Era origins.

The twists and turns in this relationship between *The House of the Seven Gables* and its eponymous museum do not close the book on an interpretation of the text. Rather, this one institution's story opens new directions for the public history of American literature. Where else might we find other such unanticipated sites of activist criticism outside both the academy and the pages of public writing? How many sites of literary veneration and iconoclasm, each deeply interpretive activities that should command critical attention, have escaped our grasp because of their supposed commercialism, opaque cultural politics, or connection to local tourist economies? The horizons through which we conceive of critical engagement—the very meaning of what literary interpretation looks like in public—might well be expanded by an openness to such encounters.

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NOTES

1. Genette's sense of this "presentation" of the text is famously double: it offers a specific version of the text for consumption and "ensure[s] the text's presence in the world" (1).

2. William Charvat's introduction to the Centenary edition of *House of the Seven Gables* summarizes this exchange between Hawthorne and the likes of Reverend Thomas R. Pynchon (*CE* 2:xxiv–xxv). Hawthorne's note about not wanting to "meddle with the

characteristics" of the Salem community—already included in his preface to the first edition—evidently did not go far enough to fend off this criticism (*CE* 2:3).

3. Chase's argument applies a national framework to Hawthorne's distinction between the novel and romance. For Chase, the novel is an English form suited to an "imperial" ordering of reality, while the American romance is exploratory, plumbing the "unexamined territories of life in the New World" (4–5). Romance in this usage is a mock-heroic expedition into chaos rather than a meticulous, mimetic reconstruction of social reality. The political implications of Chase's false binary between "imperialism" and "exploration"—as if the latter were not the first stage of the former—are out of the scope of my analysis here.

4. The italics are Lathrop's own emphasis on Hawthorne's words. Lathrop's introduction to the Riverside edition is much more interested in biographical than architectural speculations about sources for Hawthorne's narrative.

5. The Uptons' sign is held in the collections at the House of the Seven Gables Museum. I thank David Moffat, the House Museum's Visitor Services Specialist and general Turner-Ingersoll historian, for his calculation of the Uptons' annual tourist traffic, based on his tabulation of their visitors' books.

6. Henry James writes of this as a problem of perception when it comes to canonized figures: "When there are appearances that might have nourished [genius] we see it as swallowing them all; yet we see [genius] as equally gorged when there are no appearances at all—then most of all, sometimes, quite insolently bloated" (*American Scene* 272).

7. The invocation of "poetry" and "art" in this context signals that these ruminations on *The House of the Seven Gables* elaborate on the theory of the novel as a "fine art" with which James famously begins his 1884 essay "The Art of Fiction." The encounter with the Turner-Ingersoll mansion ultimately leads him to reflect on genius, I argue, because it is a case study in which the author-function transforms an original "idea" into a Jamesian art object, worthy of the fine appreciation reserved for those elevated genres.

8. The area around Derby Street on the Salem waterfront—densely populated with single-family homes converted to tenements in the early twentieth century—is called "Little Poland" in Wilczenski and Murphy's photographic history of Salem's Polish population (7).

9. The *Centenary Edition* of Hawthorne's letters reprints this letter of May 1840, noting that it is Conolly's transcription produced for a letter to William Northend (*CE* 15:457, 15:747). By the time the letter to Northend was written in the 1880s, though, Conolly had squandered his Ingersoll inheritance and could well have produced the letter from Hawthorne for a quick sale. My account of Conolly's letter—and current understanding of the house's renovation history more broadly—derives from conversations with David Moffat. I thank him profusely for an enlightening and patient tour of the house. I would also like to thank Susan Baker, the House Museum's Curator of Collections, for guiding me through the Museum's library and archives.

10. David Moffat described the house as a "postmodern structure" while showing me around, and this label is apt: the museum is a pastiche of colonial and nineteenth-century forms, a mix of rigorously researched architectural restorations and audacious inventions drawn from the novel.

11. The house echoes Hepzibah's reopening of a long-dormant shop, though: there is evidence of a small shop there in the seventeenth century (though it was not in the same room that "Hepzibah's shop" now occupies). Still, Emmerton's shop is fully identified with the *fictional* shop opened in the nineteenth century by Hepzibah. Emmerton even ran the ticket counter and gift shop of the museum out of the cent-shop in the museum's early decades. (The modern gift shop is now in a separate building.)

12. The staircase controversy is almost too much to go into here. Emmerton claims that she *restored* it, crediting Upton's story that he previously found and filled the staircase in. Henry Upton told Emmerton that he had found a "secret staircase" in the late nineteenth century and had it covered back up. Emmerton tasked the architect with its restoration, this time wrapped around the chimney. David Moffat speculates that Upton found a decommissioned servant's staircase *somewhere other than the chimney*, and took it to be a passageway of salacious secrecy—an idea Emmerton ran with and wrapped around the chimney to make the walk-through tour go a single direction.

13. The latter quotation comes from one of Emmerton's tour scripts at the museum. William Gleason points out that this line in the script makes it seem like Hawthorne actually lived in the house (17).

14. I have been unable to physically consult a copy of the book with the dust jacket still attached, though scans of the design are available online ("House"). This digital surrogate in the University of Wisconsin's "Publisher's Bindings Online" collection suggests that there are at least two variants of the publisher's cloth binding: the House Museum's copy has gold lettering in Hawthorne's name, UW has black. The front of the dust jacket misplaces the apostrophe, calling it the "Visitor's Edition."

15. Though plate positioning has long remained outside bibliographers' purview given differences between relief and intaglio print processes and the inconsistency of plate locations between copies, I feel fairly confident making claims about this and other placements in the Visitors' Edition. They seem to remain in the same places in different physical copies and digital facsimiles I've examined.

16. The Visitors' Edition has not been recorded as a printing from the Riverside plates in either Jacob Blanck's *Bibliography of American Literature* (1963) or C. E. Frazer Clark's *Nathaniel Hawthorne: A Descriptive Bibliography* (1978). The tell, though, is the printing of vestigial volume identifiers in the single-volume Visitors' Edition, like "VOL. III." on the signature line at the bottom of the first page of the main text (Hawthorne, *House* [Visitors'] 17). *House* begins the third volume of the Riverside edition plates; the pagination and compared text seems also to be identical between the Visitors' and Riverside (though I have not performed a full collation).

17. These revisions (and those discussed in the final section about "Scenes from the House of the Seven Gables") open the field of interpretive possibilities enough for such a generic re-grounding to be more plausible, not for it to be incontrovertible. Consistent with recent constructivist work in genre theory, I understand genre to be made in such acts of claiming and categorization, not exclusively in immanent features of texts. For two kindred approaches in very different generic contexts (the lyric poem and genre fiction), see Virginia Jackson's *Dickinson's Misery* and John Rieder's *Science Fiction and the Mass Cultural Genre System*.

18. Most of these essays are undated, but at least one dates to 1905, before the Museum was even founded.

19. This exchange is from the fifth script in the Emmerton papers. It is one of only two full scripts I encountered, and the much longer of the two. I believe it is also the only one with evidence of a performance: a program for the evening held in the next folder.

20. "Banditti-like associates" is Hepzibah's free-indirect characterization of Holgrave's comrades (*CE* 2:84).

21. McGill argues that Holgrave's renunciation of mesmeric authority and "reverence" for Phoebe's individual freedom is meant to "become the moral and tonal signature of his novel"—a scene of moral force that "prefigures," even ensures, the book's "jarringly happy ending" (266–67). According to Shelley Streeby, Hawthorne sees Holgrave as an example of an aggressive "working-class radicalism," a "lawless mesmeric masculinity" that must be "subdued by loving middle-class discipline" (459, 464–65).

22. Because Emmerton's project is steeped in the specific framework of early twentieth-century settlement sociology and social work, it is no surprise that in some cases Emmerton's description of Holgrave is laced with the insipid moral hygiene, even eugenics, that often shot through this form of uplift politics. From such an angle, the "virtuous development" of the Maule/Holgrave family may be as genetic as it is social, though the prologue does not linger on this developmental note for long.

23. According to Richard Brodhead, Hawthorne's official status meant he was "almost synonymous with literature itself" for aspiring American authors in the post-Civil War decades (51).

24. For Brooks's specific perspective here, see the still-lively essay "On Creating a Usable Past."

25. Casey Nelson Blake's book-length study of these "Young American" critics finds in their cultural criticism a radical (if ultimately limited) "communitarian vision of self-realization through participation in a democratic culture" (2). This group should not be confused with the "Young America" faction of Jacksonian Democrats that boosted the literary efforts of Hawthorne and other American Renaissance writers during the 1840s and 1850s.

26. Brooks was frank about this as a critical project animated by reinvention: "If we need another past so badly, is it inconceivable that we might discover one, that we might even invent one?" ("On Creating a Usable Past" 223).

27. Lawrence makes these claims in his influential 1923 book *Studies in Classic American Literature*.

28. For Denning, this cultural-political formation names the collision of a broadly social-democratic and anti-fascist historical bloc, the Popular Front, with the creative laborers of the "cultural apparatus" (38–40).

29. Denning's premier example of the Front's attempt to seize the institutions of the "cultural apparatus" are the various cultural projects of the Works Progress Administration from 1935 to 1945 and the postwar "semipublic institutional culture of foundations, museums, and universities" that these WPA initiatives influenced (44–45).

30. Gleason bases this analysis chiefly on the scene in "The Arched Window" in which Clifford longs to leap into the "polyglot future" he sees in the street (14, 21).

31. The full context for this phrase, which becomes so vivid for Gleason's argument: Clifford speculates that "had I taken that plunge [through the arched window], and survived it, methinks it would have made me another man!" (CE 2:166).

32. In McGill's reading of *House's* place in Hawthorne's career, the "fiction of early obscurity" through which Hawthorne downplays his own earlier success in less prestigious genres of the literary marketplace is more of a rhetorical fabrication than material reality of his early status. *The House of the Seven Gables*, McGill argues, weaves those previous forms into its narrative, exposing their insufficiency for his new project to capture prestigious literary authority with the romance (253).

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