



Hawthorne and Women: Engendering and Expanding the Hawthorne Tradition

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Nathaniel Hawthorne is notorious for complaining in a letter to one of his publishers that a "damn'd mob of scribbling women" was stealing his audience. Elsewhere, he referred to women authors as "ink-stained Amazons" who were "without a single exception, detestable," and once expressed his wish that all women be "forbidden to write, on pain of having their faces deeply scarified with an oyster-shell."

This collection of original essays presents a more complex and positive view of Hawthorne's attitudes toward women, demonstrating his recognition of the crucial role that women played?as critics, reviewers, readers, and authors?in building a national readership that made his writing career so successful.

The book begins with an examination of the influence exerted by the women in Hawthorne's immediate family. It goes on to explore his links to a broad range of women writers, as well as his attitudes toward the female characters he created. Among the authors discussed are Margaret Fuller, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Louisa May Alcott, Emily Dickinson, Sarah Orne Jewett, Willa Cather, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, George Eliot, Virginia Woolf, Flannery O'Connor, and Toni Morrison.

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