The Transcendentalist Novel in America” (1860)

Is mythology back in favor? Pans, satyrs, and fauns are returning by leaps and bounds. There is a satyr in the new novel by this American storyteller. Along with La légende des siècles,¹ that makes two of them over the course of several months:

On connaissait Stulcas, faune de Pallantyre,
Gès, qui, le soir, riait sur le Ménale assis,
Bos, l’aegipan de Crète; on entendait Chrysis,
Sylvain du Ptyx que l’homme appelle Janicule,
Qui jouait de la flûte au fond du crépuscule;
Anthrops, faune de Pinde, était cité partout;
Celui-ci, nulle part.

[We knew Stulcas, the faun of Pallantyre,
Gès, who, at night, laughed while sitting on the Menalo,
Bos, Crete’s aegipan; we heard Chrysis,
Sylvain of the Ptyx, whom man called Janiculum,
Who played the flute as the sun began to set;
Anthrops, Pindar’s faun, was cited everywhere;
This one, nowhere.]
More or less twins in time, these creatures nevertheless are very different. The poet’s faun has morals worthy of the parents whose lower body he resembles. In the past, French verse behaved like a great lady, with great decorum (like tragedy in Horace), and never would have danced the saraband, blushing with shame, with an illiterate satyr: *Intererit Satyris paulum pudibunds protervis.*

The novelist’s is neither Pan nor Aegipan. He is just as much a faun as they, but he is also the heir of all the ages, the most charming model of a young man, except that he sports a pair of slightly pointed ears crowned with small tufts of fur. Don’t let the keenness of these auditory organs alarm you. They are not the symbol of any brute instinct; they are simply signs of a sylvan nature, alert to the slightest noises of the forest. Hawthorne’s satyr is the *Faun* of Praxiteles, whose innocent peace is troubled not even by a cloud. He is eternal adolescence and unfailing and pure joy.

That is not all: the poet’s satyr is a veritable allegory, a more or less poetic form embodying pantheism. As long as the allegory is graceful, it hardly matters that it lacks the feeling of loss conveyed by Goethe’s “Ganymede”—so short, so sober, and so impassioned. The novelist’s is a real character, an Italian, Donatello, Count of Monte Beni: he lives there, walks there, talks there without being aware of anything in the world called pantheism.

These two beings are separated by a distance, a distance equivalent to that which separates America from Europe, the sites of their respective nativities. And yet it is impossible that they are not related. It is not by caprice that we compare them; it is not by chance that they were born at the same moment in the Old World and the New. The same philosophical inspiration that seems to be in the air has given birth to them. This doctrine has a name, but it serves to designate two very different systems. Today I want to shed light on the particular system to which Hawthorne is attached by examining his very curious novel, *Transformation.* Never has he been more metaphysical; no other work reveals the extent to which he has been schooled by his philosophical master. Up until now, he seemed most conspicuously to be the great nephew of the old Puritan founders of New England, and we studied him from this point of view ourselves. We knew very well that this son of the Puritans was, at heart, a Transcendentalist. But we deferred considering the latter for a more favorable opportunity, and that opportunity has arrived. Though it might seem illogical to combine philosophical and literary analysis (two things that address two different orders of readers), in this case it is not impossible to answer the expectations of both.

As a disciple of Emerson—that rarest of intellects, no less distinguished as a poet than as a philosopher—Hawthorne took from Transcendentalism
its poetic element. He does not write novels to spread a philosophy, but he quarries philosophical ideas that give life and inspiration to his novels. This is the important thing: the principal concern of a novel is the story itself; but it also needs an ideal, and that it seeks from philosophy. To whom does the novelist owe the idea of his modern faun, the most important conception in his book?

To our surprise, he came looking for his ideal in this old Europe, the mother of genius, the old wet nurse to so many. She told them so many beautiful tales in their childhood that even those who crossed the ocean remember them and never grow weary of coming back to ask for them again. America is too young a mother to know many of the old stories. Everything there is new, well organized, well constructed. There are no edifices in ruins. Legends find no old walls to which they can attach themselves. The Ideal is like parietaria—it cannot grow on newly quarried stones. Thus, it was to Rome, the metropolis of the Ancient World, that the storyteller came to seek his inspiration. No doubt, one day, when he was strolling through those Vatican galleries (with his Poet's admiration and his American skepticism abreast and side to side), suddenly he stopped himself in front of that Faun of Praxiteles—so alive, so young, so handsome. He, the Puritan, the Transcendentalist, the citizen of a sad, mirthless nation, arrived in front of this beauty, this youth, this freshness, this childish laughter, and cried to himself, “I’ve found it!”

But can we be sure that this conception was new to him? Before having met it in all of its plastic beauty, realized for the eyes but imprisoned in marble, did he not see it floating in the ethereal regions of the imagination—less striking, true, but free and pure like an idea? Could he not remember having perceived on a certain day, at a certain moment of his life, a being that was neither man nor animal, but a beautiful intermediary between the two: an attempt by Nature to outdo the Creation, a supreme and final retouching of a being stripped of reason? Another touch of the Divine finger, another brushstroke of the eternal Painter, another beam from the source of Light, and a new man is created. Perhaps he resembles other men, but he has not yet been altered and made sophisticated by civilization, retaining all the innocent characteristics of creatures who live in the forests and the fields. Woods, verdure, flowers, streams running under the overhanging branches, flocks in the field, wild beasts in the woods: all of this was melted down and condensed in the graceful creation of the faun. I repeat, was the marble of the Greek artist a new discovery for the storyteller? If I am not mistaken, he could have said the same words to this marble statue that his master addressed in a similar circumstance: I know you; the beauty of your
lines is surprising me for the first time, but you are “the old, eternal fact I had met already in so many forms,—with which I lived, and which I left at home in so many conversations.” Nothing has changed around me except the place, “and I said to myself: O! ‘Thou foolish child, hast thou come out hither, over four thousand miles of salt water, to find that which was perfect to thee there at home?’” That done, “It traveled by my side; I imagined that I had left it in Boston, and I found it in the Vatican. . . ”

One might ask in which area of America the storyteller found his faun: if it were in some virgin forest or among some remnants of the Chippewa or the Huron tribes. I would answer that mythology is not the exclusive domain of the arts or poetry, and that at the source of all myths will be found latent distillations of philosophy. It was no doubt some great, yet unknown philosopher who invented the first hybrid beings, the satyrs, to provide the missing link between the animals and man. One day when he was “God-intoxicated” (as Novalis said of Spinoza), this unknown philosopher (who nevertheless existed) gave birth to this poetic monstrosity. That very day, the god Nature “who stirs silently in the waters and winds, who sleeps in the plants, who gives life to the animal, and who gives reason to man,” created a new being, a consciousness midway between simple waking and reason, between animal and man. That was the day that pantheism was born.

Thus we can believe that Hawthorne’s faun was sired neither by the wilderness nor by solitude (like the satyrs of Plutarch or certain Fathers of the Church), but simply by philosophy, much like the homunculus of Doctor Faust. We would not even be surprised to catch a glimpse of the nest where he was hatched in one of the most abstruse and shadowy corners of Emerson’s Essays. “The universe is represented in every one of its particles. Every thing in nature contains all the powers of nature. Every thing is made of one hidden stuff; as the naturalist sees one type under every metamorphosis, and regards a horse as a running man, a fish as a swimming man, a bird as a flying man, a tree as a rooted man.” Without insisting on Emerson’s pantheism, which is hardly in doubt, it will suffice to take my readers for a walk in the groves of Transcendentalism, and to find there some traces of the romancer. That same hidden stuff, those metamorphoses, are purely identical, and, if we look carefully, we will find the very same expression. But let us quickly escape these big metaphysical words, and say simply that Hawthorne’s faun is much more a literary experience than a philosophical study. Another time, perhaps, we shall get the metamorphosis of a plant into an animal. But for now, let us be content with this very modest and very ideal metamorphosis of the most charming of animals into an individual of the human species.
How will this metamorphosis happen? The very title of the book, *Transformation*, proves that this is the central subject of the novel. It would take all the art of a philosopher—together with that of a poet—to make today's readers accept this utterly fantastic idea. For his faun, he provides an Arcadia, Rome and its ruins, even a Rome seen from atop Saint Peter's, from the Capitol to the Tarpeian Rock, from summits that the noises of real life never reach.

Donatello, the Count of Monte Beni, noble descendant of one of the oldest families of Tuscany, has followed to Rome a foreign woman of rare beauty, Miriam, whose family lineage is obscure, but which reputedly is allied with one of the most powerful houses in the city of the Popes. The love of the Count and the signora is not one of those Italian loves that expresses itself in sighs, in gallant gifts, in amorous sonnets, reminiscent of Metastasio or Petrarch. An ordinary and common flame cannot exist between two beings who so little resemble their surroundings; doubtless, only a man as handsome as Donatello, Praxiteles' marble faun come to life, could suit Miriam, a beautiful living image of some Amazon from Antiquity.

Is Miriam Italian? Her independent existence, without parents to live with her, without a husband or lover, does not permit us to think so. With her freedom of expression and judgment, we would be tempted to take her for an Englishwoman, but a closer look at her eyes and her skin tone (darkened by the desert sun of the Orient) prevents us from accepting that conclusion. Whether she be Roman, English, or Jewish, Miriam has something in her very being that intimates a premonition of unhappiness. Is it sadness, a painful memory, an inexplicable anxiety? Mystery surrounds her soul as well as her person. Only a vulgar fool would be baited by this mystery, and he would soon see himself punished for it. Any man who dreams seriously of joining his destiny to Miriam's would be truly imprudent. Besides, the beautiful signora defends herself with scornful and ironic pride. She has a strong arm against all weakness and a secret that is impossible to share and upon which her life and honor seem to depend.

To complete the picture, beautiful and rich foreigner that she is, Miriam has the habits and even the talent of an artist. She occupies a Roman palace, since that is what they call those dilapidated aristocratic residences. The main salon of her palace is an artist's studio. There, if it is true that the paintbrush has something to say about the painter's soul, perhaps we can discover some clues about Miriam's secret. Her favorite paintings (and, what is more, the only canvasses she has done for some time) tell only of retribution and murderous passions. The artist's brush is almost drunk with blood. Here, a triumphant Judith, who holds the head of her enemy, and who looks with
an implacable eye at the blood that flows in streams. Only unquenchable
vengeance can reach such heights of energy. Elsewhere, with invincible hor-
or, Herodias contemplates the severed head of John the Baptist, murdered
by her command. One might say that the hand that satisfied itself in draft-
ing these images of cruelty also expressed, in spite of itself, an anticipated
remorse. What if all of those canvases, whose bloody fantasies are admired
but laughingly dismissed by Miriam’s friends, are confessions written with
a paintbrush? Yet this studio, solitary domain of a woman’s soul, is haunted
not only by murderous thoughts: the palette held by that white hand has
known more joyous colors than that of blood. Here and there, we see clearly
images of happiness smiling, sketches of the joys given to man. But even
here, worry is not absent, an ever-present witness to the happiest moments
in life. Sometimes we see depicted a naïve love barely aware of itself, of the
hour that is passing, and the austere future that is approaching. Sometimes
it is a strong and calm love, the saintly love of husband and wife, between
the hearth and the cradle. Sometimes it might be a fresh pastoral replete
with dancing, music, and flowers. But in the background of all these paintings,
otherwise relaxed and rejoicing, there is always a somber figure who attends
all these joys with envy, and this figure has a certain vague resemblance to
Miriam.

Why does Miriam show, if not love, at least a marked fondness for the
Count of Monte Beni? How is she able to let that truly primitive and inno-
cent soul attach itself to her? For that very reason, we might take her for a
novice—even a virgin. This young man is beneath the love of a woman such
as Miriam; but the origin of his inferiority also renders him more worthy of
attachment and interest. One loves a child, not with ardor, but with tender-
ness. Donatello is something more—and less—than a man.

Donatello is, as it were, the ravishing figure that appeared to Praxiteles
the day he conceived his Faun. He is the Faun himself. Only instead of
being born in the artist’s workshop, he was newly delivered from the hands
of Nature and carries her recent imprint. His joyous and unselfconscious
soul resembles . . . the gentle type that Virgil, Nature’s poet, ascribes to
young animals. He has no idea of evil—not even a taste for it, or an aver-
sion. His innocence is natural—perhaps a trifle pagan, but gracious: the only
innocence that the Ancients knew. It is the innocence of fauns who bound
through the forest and the bird who pushes itself out of the nest while trilling
its song for the first time. The air and the forest alike are home to his broth-
ers. Donatello knows them, calls to them, and they respond to his voice.

A modern poet has anticipated and sketched out the poetic figure of
Donatello, and we shall avail ourselves of his work to characterize the young
Count of Monte Beni. Let us remember only that the latter has no idea of his gifts and even less of his deficiencies.

And such I knew, a forest seer,
A minstrel of the natural year,
Foreteller of the vernal ides,

. . .
It seemed that nature could not raise
A plant in any secret place,
In quaking bog, on snowy hill,
Beneath the grass that shades the rill,
Under the snow, between the rocks,
In damp fields known to bird and fox,
But he would come in the very hour
It opened in its virgin bower,
As if a sunbeam showed the place,
And tell its long-descended race.
It seemed as if the breezes brought him,
It seemed as if the sparrows taught him,
As if by secret sight he knew
Where in far fields the orchis grew.
There are many events in the field
Which are not shown to common eyes,
But all her shows did nature yield
To please and win this pilgrim wise.
He saw the partridge drum in the woods,
He heard the woodcock’s evening hymn,
He found the tawny thrush’s broods,
And the shy hawk did wait for him.
What others did at distance hear,
And guessed within the thicket’s gloom,
Was showed to this philosopher,
And at his bidding seemed to come.  

Take away from this portrait of the lover of nature everything that reminds us of the sage and the philosopher. In place of reflection put instinct, and you have Donatello.

For most men, the beauties of nature speak a language that explains itself little by little and penetrates the soul. Donatello senses them with the impetuosity of passion. When his organization (a rustic one, we might say)
tires of the artificial atmosphere of the city and shivers at the cold and severe aspect of statues, churches, and ruins, he runs to the Borghese gardens, where Art does not impose itself however far and wide one rambles. There the breath of an almost wild nature intoxicates him, as if it were a full-bodied wine. All alone he runs down the paths, he leaps to catch a branch of a tree and swings himself through the air. He is exultant, divinely mad. He has raptures in which he embraces the trunk of a sturdy tree—as if he heard a heart beating under the bark that responds to his hug—strikingly like the faun of Antiquity who tried to clasp the body of a Nymph who lived within the tree’s rough outer shell, ready perhaps to wake in his arms. At other times, he stretches himself out on the ground, so as to hold the maternal breast of the earth closer to him, and he presses his lips to violets and daisies that seem, in spite of their natural modesty, to kiss him back.

While he is lying motionless on the turf, it is pleasant to see how green and blue lizards leave their rock in the sun to span the length of Donatello’s person with their little feet, or how birds leap and sing their chorus about him. Perhaps they recognize him as one of theirs. Perhaps they think he is rooted there, and that he grows like any other tree. What is certain is that they do not see him as an enemy (like other men), and that they are no more fearful of him than they would be of a hillock of grass and flowers.

We could go on forever if we only wanted to recall all the strange things to be said about this young Count. About one thing, however, we cannot be silent: the origin of his family. His genealogy is pure mythology, but it lends romantic interest to his lineage. According to tradition, the Monte Beni go back to that Pelasgian era when the beings and gods of the forests took little care to hide themselves in the shrubbery. The father of the first Monte Beni was one of these savage gods, who had loved a mortal maiden, having won her charms either through unexpected courtesy and delicacy or, perhaps, by means more in keeping with his brutal nature. Either genealogists have sought to give this family a very flattering link to Antiquity, or, more likely, the pointed ears that have renewed themselves from time to time in the house steered their imagination in their prehistoric research. Donatello passes for the veritable son of fauns (like Aeneas, the offspring of the goddess Venus, and Romulus of Mars). As to the rest, a little of the fantastic is not unusual in the towns of Etruria, and, if my memory serves me right, Boccaccio, in his poem *Ameto*, has the first forefather of the Florentine people born of a satyr and a human woman.

Does the Monte Beni family derive its glory from their pointed ears, as certain houses do of physical deformities to which they are privileged (like the protuberant lower lip of an illustrious reigning house)?
Are they proud or ashamed of these bizarre traditions? Of this we cannot be sure. It often happens that they cover their ears (as did the imposter Smerdis—from whom they were cut); thus it is difficult to make any statement about the presumptive acuity of that auditory organ. But doubtless other signs of that lineage (intellectual and, especially, moral) are visible from time to time in this member of the family: beauty, strength, bravura, generosity, sincerity, and simple tastes—a love for ordinary country pleasures, a certain secret gift for befriending wild beasts and birds, a certain sympathy for trees among which he takes pleasure above all. For all these gifts, he also possesses singular deficiencies in intelligence and heart (the higher human faculties); these become more conspicuous as the years pass while the primitive gifts have had time to become corrupted and altered.

Such is the young Count of Monte Beni who renounces his happy Tuscan solitudes to follow the mysterious Miriam: he is sad, but trusting, when he sees a cloud on her pensive brow; happy when he sees her smile. And he asks for no other happiness than to follow her steps like a handsome spaniel, wanting only a caress from time to time, and permission to sleep at its mistres's feet.

These youthful joys could have lasted for a long time if a strange incident had not awakened in Miriam a memory of an inexorable past and, in Donatello, feelings of hate that he had never known before. One day, accompanied by Donatello and two American friends (like her, sculptors and painters), Miriam is exploring the catacombs. All of a sudden, they notice that the beautiful artist of bloody canvases is missing. To describe Donatello's anguish while he searches for Miriam in those funereal subterranean depths would be difficult. Like a faithful dog who has lost track of his master, he is the first to find her. But discovered with her is someone with a strange demeanor, from whom Donatello instinctively is repelled: more sagacious than human reason, his nature tells him, “This is the enemy.” Miriam's pallor, the agitation and horror that betray themselves in her whole person, confirm for Donatello the voice of instinct. From that day forward, he ceases to be the joyous child of the forests because he no longer sees Miriam's smile. An unknown figure shadowing the woman he loves, incessantly renewing his terrors yet exercising over her an inexplicable dominion, would have thrown any other man into a frenzy of dismay, wavering between disgust and defiance, disdain and jealousy. For Donatello, the unfortunate presence of this stranger casts a first pall of gloom over his life. It provokes his anger without diminishing his confidence in Miriam, and changes the impassioned instincts of his lively nature into savage impulses for vengeance. Gentle and harmless like the most innocent of animals, he is drawn without hesitation to the idea of murder.
For her part, Miriam fears this character no less than she hates him. Is he linked to the secret that makes her tremble? Does he have the power to destroy her honor—or some far worse terror yet? Is Miriam innocent? Or are the visions of murder that occupy her artistic imagination images—only too exact—of real blood that has stained her small feminine hand? Then again, as happens to so many innocent people, perhaps she holds the fatal responsibility for a crime that others have committed? After the encounter in the catacombs, where he seemed to be hidden until then, nothing can quell the stranger's obstinacy. At night, he sleeps at Miriam's door, like one of the thousands of beggars who take refuge in the porticos of Italian palaces. During the day, we can be certain that he will emerge from behind a ruin or suddenly appear in the midst of a piazza like Hamlet's ghost. Miriam's imagination is no less besieged than her palazzo and her person. The figure of the stranger always slides through the bristles of her paintbrush to occupy a corner in her canvases. At last he is called Miriam's model.

The heavy chains that bind together two beings who hate one another most often are forged in a furnace of evil passions and misdeeds. Only death can break them. Miriam foresees that death will be her only deliverance. But she seems to believe in her innocence, and this makes her cling to life. When her eyes fell on Donatello—perhaps happiness might still be hers? Amid these fluctuations of thought, time passes and the hour approaches when the stranger will fulfill the threat of his vengeance or his jealousy. More than once Miriam has contemplated a poison that could put her torment to an end, or the Tiber into which she might disappear. More than once, she realizes that Donatello (that overgrown child, tender and mirthful) has only been waiting for a sign to become a man of blood. Only her most desperate prayers have saved the life of her tormentor.

One evening, during a promenade on the Capitol, Miriam and Donatello stay behind their friends on a little platform surrounded by a parapet, from which they overlook the houses of Rome in all their infinite multitude. Left by themselves, their conversation turns to memories of the Tarpeian Rock, where they have found themselves. Silence and solitude seem to surround Donatello and Miriam: their talk continues; Donatello questions Miriam about the rock from which traitors in ancient times were thrown. While listening, the former seems distracted by something strange, like a hunting dog that is striving to obey his master, but whose attention nervously is focused on something further off. They are not alone: a shadow emerges from the depths of a niche once occupied by a statue. It approaches Miriam; it is the model who now stands between Miriam and Donatello, between his victim and his enemy, at the edge of a precipice. At that moment, a violent
scene transpires between these three beings who are fatally chained together, all of whom know that a supreme crisis has arrived, at that height and that distance, in the silence of the night, far removed from the tranquility and peace in which the rest of humanity are immersed. There is a struggle, but not a long one. And when a friend of Miriam’s, who has noticed her absence, retraces her footsteps, she sees Donatello holding a man suspended above the precipice, possibly questioning Miriam with his eyes.

Before letting the stranger fall into this empty space (in which we see numberless gables and steep-pitched roofs), or saving his life and rescuing him from this sorry end, let us be permitted to make several reflections on this book and its author. In allowing ourselves this digression (which will not be long), we follow the practice of Homer, who did not hesitate to introduce his most important discourses at the moment when his heroes were holding up their arms to strike the decisive blow. Or, better still, we are following Hawthorne’s example, who, like a good philosopher, grasps the fleeting yet somber moment—when the poisoned chalice rises to the lips, or the pike hovers above the wound—to state his moral.

A stranger who possesses a secret he exploits, a young man who blindly loves a woman who is vastly superior to him, a night-time scene of violence at the edge of a precipice—in and of themselves there is nothing new here. Reduced to its bare bones, this story would be the most common of melodramas. But we are not practicing literary osteology; it is more important to grasp the very principle of life which animates a work of art. For better or worse, Hawthorne’s novels are always governed by an Idea. In some instances, the Idea is Puritan (as in The Scarlet Letter, his most brilliant work, or, in The House of the Seven Gables, his most dramatic). In others, it is completely Transcendental (or, to put it differently, informed by Kant, Schelling, and Hegel himself). In these latter works, we can sum things up even better by identifying the influence of a man who has harvested that bumper crop of German philosophy—namely, Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Donatello is happy as long as he is not transformed: in becoming a man through transgression (which is to say out of remorse, out of a knowledge of good and evil), he climbs a step on the ladder of creation. But, at the same time, he falls into the miseries of human life. The chapter in the midst of which we have paused is entitled “The Faun’s Transformation,” which is the very name of the book. It is also its signature. A long ladder along which elements climb ceaselessly, or rather, one element—at once material, intellectual, and moral: this is the image of Transcendentalism. Hawthorne’s faun could be taken for the type of this philosophy, just as another school had Condillac’s statue or the first man of Buffon.21 The word happiness is
Donatello’s alpha and omega. Having from man only physical beauty, the faun still possesses the quietude of plants and the unselfconscious simplicity of animals. Benefiting from a blind but divine happiness, he breathes the infinite without knowing. This first state is like a golden age for Donatello, scarcely bothered by the dim shadow that occasionally casts on his life the approaching change of his destiny.

Never has Hawthorne written more beautifully than in three chapters meant to discuss the relationship between Art and happiness: “The Suburban Villa,” “The Faun and Nymph,” and “The Sylvan Dance.” There, Donatello surrenders to his rustic merriment and drags Miriam into the middle of a country dance to the sound of the zampogna. The illusion is complete: Miriam and Donatello are a nymph of Antiquity dancing with a merry companion of Bacchus. The fearless Romagnols, wearing goatskins or half-naked, are satyrs and sylvans who respond to the sound of the tambourine and join in unison with the crazy joy of Donatello. One might say that the scene resembles a bas-relief from Antiquity depicting the Dionysiacs, detached from the marble vase it had encircled. First of all, these pages are remarkable, coming from the pen of a descendant of the Puritans. They do not seem to comport with the lugubrious tone of so many other of Hawthorne’s tales. But only when this merriment vanishes can one appreciate its value. The habit of seeing nature and mankind in mourning renders joy as necessary as sunlight.

Our joyous faun touches again on this side of Emerson’s philosophy. Open The Blithedale Romance to the chapter about the legend of Zenobia and you will find the definition of this philosophy: Transcendentalists are honest people who quest for a happier life, a better life. Look for happiness, show man happiness in this life: that is the doctrine in its entirety—Transcendental in principle, befitting the school from which it came from Germany, but practical in its results, essential to the Anglo-Saxons. This avowed goal of happiness is the opposite of Puritanism; if we look closely, we can see that, taken seriously, this philosophy would corrupt Christian ideas. Spinoza said it a long time ago: “If science consists in knowing nature, and wisdom in enjoying it, let us repudiate the precepts of abstinence, let us distance ourselves from sadness; wisdom is a meditation not of death, but of life.”

The faun enjoys nature without true knowledge. He is unselfconscious, yet lives at the heart of the infinite. Man, aware of himself, is finished. He cannot achieve happiness except by means of knowledge, and by losing himself in the heart of infinity. When Donatello throws himself on the ground to embrace the earth in the Villa Borghese he reminds us of Werther, seated
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on the grass in his German village, intoxicating himself with the palpitations of the earth whose heart responds to his. Both are Spinozists, but the first is one without knowing it, and the second is not enough of one. If he were more of one, if he knew the dogma of compensation, the philosophy of circles and Transcendentalism better, he would understand why it might be a happiness to be deprived of Lolotte. He would enjoy nature; he would meld his soul into the Oversoul without the necessity of firing a pistol to make that fusion happen.

I have already cited a piece of Emerson’s on the philosophy of solitude. Nothing proves better how much the character of Donatello is simply an Emersonian conception. That seer, that lover of nature who is barely still a man is the double for this faun who is not yet a man. Here is a page from Hawthorne. To please his friend, the American sculptor Kenyon, whom he has received in his domain, Donatello consents to demonstrate his knowledge of the language by which (in years past) he could summon the inhabitants of the forests. Even though at this moment he is no longer the joyous Faun of Praxiteles, he truly wants to reclaim his secret affinity with the animals.

“From my earliest childhood, I was familiar with whatever creatures haunt the woods. You would have laughed to see the friends I had among them; yes, among the wild, nimble things, that reckon man their deadliest enemy! How it was first taught me, I cannot tell; but there was a charm—a voice, a murmur, a kind of chant—by which I called the woodland inhabitants, the furry people, and the feathered people, in a language that they seemed to understand.”

“I have heard of such a gift,” responded the sculptor gravely, “but never before met with a person endowed with it. Pray try the charm; and lest I should frighten your friends away, I will withdraw into this thicket, and merely peep at them.”

“I doubt,” said Donatello, “whether they will remember my voice now. [It changes, you know, as the boy grows towards manhood.]”

Nevertheless, as the young Count’s good-nature and easy persuadability were among his best characteristics, he set about complying with Kenyon’s request. The latter, in his concealment among the shrubberies, heard him send forth a sort of modulated breath, wild, rude, yet harmonious. It struck the auditor as at once the strangest and the most natural utterance that had ever reached his ears. Any idle boy, it should seem, singing to himself and setting his wordless song to no other or more definite tune than the play of his own pulses, might produce a sound almost identical with this; and yet, it was as individual as a murmur of the breeze. Donatello tried it, over and
over again, with many breaks, at first, and pauses of uncertainty; then with more confidence, and a fuller swell, like a wayfarer groping out of obscurity into the light, and moving with freer footsteps as it brightens around him.

Anon, his voice appeared to fill the air, yet not with an obtrusive clangor. The sound was of a murmurous character, soft, attractive, persuasive, friendly. The sculptor fancied that such might have been the original voice and utterance of the natural man, before the sophistication of the human intellect formed what we now call language. In this broad dialect—broad as the sympathies of nature—the human brother might have spoken to his inarticulate brotherhood that prowl the woods, or soar upon the wing, and have been intelligible to such extent as to win their confidence.

The sound had its pathos too. At some of its simple cadences, the tears came quietly into Kenyon's eyes. They welled up slowly from his heart, which was thrilling with an emotion more delightful than he had often felt before[. but which he forbore to analyze, lest, if he seized it, it should at once perish in his grasp].

Donatello paused two or three times, and seemed to listen,—then, recommencing, he poured his spirit and life more earnestly into the strain. And finally,—or else the sculptor's hope and imagination deceived him,—soft treads were audible upon the fallen leaves. There was a rustling among the shrubbery; a whir of wings, moreover, that hovered in the air. It may have been all an illusion; but Kenyon fancied that he could distinguish the stealthy, cat-like movement of some small forest citizen, and that he could even see its doubtful shadow, if not really its substance. But, all at once, whatever might be the reason, there ensued a hurried rush and scamper of little feet; and then the sculptor heard a wild, sorrowful cry, and through the crevices of the thicket beheld Donatello fling himself on the ground.

Emerging from his hiding-place, he saw no living thing, save a brown lizard (it was of the tarantula species) rustling away through the sunshine. To all present appearance, this venomous reptile was the only creature that had responded to the young Count's efforts to renew his intercourse with the lower orders of nature.

“What has happened to you?” exclaimed Kenyon, stooping down over his friend, and wondering at the anguish which he betrayed.

“<Murder, murder!> [Death, death!]” sobbed Donatello. “They know it!”

Donatello's anguish adds to the force of the scene. Since he feels guilty, the flight of his animal friends, his brothers in innocence, is a cruel pun-
ishment for him. Since evil is no longer unknown to him, the ties that bound him to all living nature are broken. This reflection brings us back to the chapter of the transformation of the faun and to the precipice of the Tarpeian Rock. Excuse this little dalliance in philosophy. For too long now Donatello has been holding the stranger suspended over the abyss. We return to the novel.

Having read in Miriam's eyes the condemnation of her tormentor, the Count of Monte Beni throws him to the bottom of the precipice. The murder is consummated; irremediable evil has been done. After the first feverish exaltation that provokes and follows the crime, after this apparent victory of defiant will over moral law, remorse overtakes the perpetrator with a force he did not foresee and he begins to understand the enormity of his error. He thought himself triumphant, but it was evil that triumphed over good in him, and the guilty one understands that he is his vanquished's prey. He has found an implacable master. At first Donatello and Miriam, freed by murder, breathe a little more easily. However, as soon as the fever has subsided, the crime changes its air. Their victim's face haunts them still, expressing (instead of hate) severity and malediction—the very look they saw (no! not for the last time) at the edge of the precipice. Walking together and leaning on each other, they move toward those from whom henceforth they will feel separated by their crime, much like Adam and Eve banished from Paradise and walking in the immense solitude of the world. But there is blood between them, and a life together that would resemble happiness is not permitted them. They must leave one another, and this separation, in accord with moral sense, is full of truth.

Like many other of Hawthorne's women (witness Zenobia of The Blithedale Romance), Miriam—the stronger of the two, not only more energetic, but hardened and in some ways flush with painful experience—braves regret and throws up a challenge to her enemy, who seems to rise from the dead to intimidate her. She is like a rebel angel when she cries to herself, "Evil, be my good!" But Donatello, who gave death blindly, who was Miriam's arm, is absolutely helpless confronting the great fact of conscience that is waking in him. Vainly, Miriam wants to help him bear the burden of moral misery: conscience has an impregnable logic. Donatello, whom Nature made inaccessible to sorrow; Donatello, who seemed a being from the Golden Age, brought to earth to teach men that life used to be joy and sunshine; Donatello must be plunged into the shadows of worry and regret. Because Miriam dragged Donatello into the crime, that very crime separates them.

The young man lifted his hand to his breast, and, unintentionally, as
Miriam’s hand was within his, he lifted that along with it. “I have a great weight here!” said he. The fancy struck Miriam (but she drove it resolutely down) that Donatello almost imperceptibly shuddered, while, in pressing his own hand against his heart, he pressed hers there too.

“Rest your heart on me, dearest one!” she resumed. “Let me bear all its weight; I am well able to bear it; for I am a woman, and I love you! I love you, Donatello! Is there no comfort for you in this avowal? Look at me! Heretofore you have found me pleasant to your sight. Gaze into my eyes! Gaze into my soul! Search as deeply as you may, you can never see half the tenderness and devotion that I henceforth cherish for you. All that I ask is your acceptance of the utter self-sacrifice (but it shall be no sacrifice, to my great love) with which I seek to remedy the evil you have incurred for my sake!”

All this fervor on Miriam’s part; on Donatello’s, a heavy silence.

“O, speak to me!” she exclaimed. “Only promise me to be, by and by, a little happy!”

“Happy?” murmured Donatello. “Ah, never again! never again!”

“Never? Ah, that is a terrible word to say to me!” answered Miriam. “A terrible word to let fall upon a woman’s heart, when she loves you, and is conscious of having caused your misery! If you love me, Donatello, speak it not again. And surely you did love me?”

“I did,” replied Donatello gloomily and absently.

Miriam released the young man’s hand, but suffered one of her own to lie close to his, and waited a moment to see whether he would make any effort to retain it. There was much depending upon that simple experiment.

With a deep sigh—as when, sometimes, a slumberer turns over in a troubled dream—Donatello changed his position, and clasped both his hands over his forehead. The genial warmth of a Roman April kindling into May was in the atmosphere around them; but when Miriam saw that involuntary movement and heard that sigh of relief (for so she interpreted it), a shiver ran through her frame, as if the iciest wind of the Apennines were blowing over her.

[“He has done himself a greater wrong than I dreamed of,” thought she, with unutterable compassion. “Alas! it was a sad mistake! He might have had a kind of bliss in the consequences of this deed, had he been impelled to it by a love vital enough to survive the frenzy of that terrible moment, mighty enough to make its own law, and justify itself against the natural remorse. But to have perpetrated a dreadful murder (and such was his crime, unless love, annihilating moral distinctions, made it otherwise) on no better warrant than a boy’s idle fantasy! I pity him from the very depths of my soul! As for myself, I am past my own or other’s pity.”]
She arose from the young man’s side, and stood before him with a sad, commiserating aspect; [it was the look of a ruined soul, bewailing, in him, a grief less than what her profounder sympathies imposed upon herself.]

“Donatello, we must part.” [she said, with melancholy firmness. “]Yes; leave me! Go back to your old tower, which overlooks the green valley you have told me of among the Apennines. Then, all that has passed will be recognized as but an ugly dream. For in dreams the conscience sleeps, and we often stain ourselves with guilt of which we should be incapable in our waking moments. The deed you seemed to do, last night, was no more than such a dream; there was as little substance in what you fancied yourself doing. Go; and forget it all!”

“Ah, that terrible face!” said Donatello, pressing his hands over his eyes. “Do you call that unreal?”

“Yes; for you beheld it with dreaming eyes,” replied Miriam. “It was unreal; and, that you may feel it so, it is requisite that you see this face of mine no more. Once, you may have thought it beautiful; now, it has lost its charm. Yet it would still retain a miserable potency to bring back the past illusion, and, in its train, the remorse and anguish [that would darken all your life]. Leave me, [therefore, and forget me.”

“Forget you, Miriam!” said Donatello, roused somewhat from his apathy of despair.

“If I could remember you, and behold you, apart from that frightful visage which stares at me over your shoulder, that were a consolation, at least, if not a joy.”

“But since that visage haunts you along with mine,” rejoined Miriam, glancing behind her, “we needs must part.] Farewell, then! [But if ever—in distress, peril, shame, poverty, or whatever anguish is most poignant, whatever burden heaviest—you should require a life to be given wholly, only to make your own a little easier, then summon me! As the case now stands between us[,] you have bought me dear, and find me of little worth. Fling me away, therefore! May you never need me more! But, if otherwise, a wish—almost an unuttered wish will bring me to you!”

She stood a moment, expecting a reply. But Donatello’s eyes had again fallen on the ground, and he had not, in his bewildered mind and overburdened heart, a word to respond.

“That hour I speak of may never come,” said Miriam. “So farewell—farewell forever.”

“Farewell,” said Donatello.

(MF 198–200)
This scene has been chosen not only because of its novelty but because it illustrates the most salient characteristic of the English and American novel. In it we find the conception of a moralist—in other words, it asks one of those questions that force one to penetrate to the very core of the human heart. Different answers to that question might be found in Paris and Boston: how can we not be interested in comparing them?

If Donatello had continued to obey instinct, to be the Faun of Praxiteles, his love would have erased any moral notion: he would have known no other law except his love. But, in gazing over the precipice from which he has hurled his enemy, he has also plunged into the abyss of consciousness. Through this initiation, he has become a man through the knowledge of evil.

This is the fundamental idea of the book. Surround a crime with motives that excuse it, circumstances that explain it, passions that render it inevitable; put in one of its authors a devotion that resembles what the world calls heroism; once the crime has been committed, purge it through remorse and show a means of progress in the evil, a source of education that transforms the primitive and blind man into a complete man, personal and free; touch (in passing) all sorts of delicate and perilous questions, like the union between good and evil, without burning one’s fingers; in a word, remake an ingeniously philosophical story of the Fall of Man—that is the book Transformation. All that precedes the scene at the precipice is only a preparation and a first stage in a novel that has only two. The rest is a meticulous analysis of the progress of Donatello’s soul through the moral regions it has entered through the portal of crime.

At first glance, we see that we might easily be deceived about this: the work might seem to be a new study of remorse in the human soul, a supplement to the powerful pages of The Scarlet Letter and The House of the Seven Gables. When it comes to the power of evil, these novelists fed on Bunyan and Calvin are prodigious: the American imagination seldom believes in the triumph of good. The victory of the Archangel Michael over Satan would seem to be an improbable subject for an American artist; but, if he did choose it, he would never (like Guido) make of Satan’s vanquisher a handsome adolescent, with glistening arms, an undamaged sword, a sky-blue tunic, barely touching his celestial sandal to his down-trodden enemy. No! No! To his Methodist eyes, virtue’s triumph would be nip-and-tuck; the struggle against a rude adversary would leave his hero more disheveled, more breathless and bruised. In his painting, the real Archangel Michael would have lost a good third of his plumage in the fight, and the rest would be as ruffled as the very feathers of Satan’s wing. His sword would be dripping with blood and perhaps even
broken. His armor would be sullied, his clothing torn, his chest bloody. That is how the American imagination sees the triumph of good over evil.\textsuperscript{27}

In \textit{Transformation}, the depiction of evil’s effects is robust. But let us not be mistaken, that good might issue from the crime, that evil might be a means of progress: these explanations of the Fall of Man are novel. If the old Puritans were brought back to life, they would find them a trifle unorthodox.

Is it necessary to say where these philosophical innovations come from? Who is the philosopher who only sees oneness in the moral world? Who tells us: “I own I am gladdened by seeing the predominance of the saccharine principle throughout vegetable nature, and not less by beholding in morals that unrestrained inundation of the principle of good into every chink and hole that selfishness has left open, yea, into selfishness and sin itself; so that no evil is pure, nor hell itself without its extreme satisfactions.”\textsuperscript{28} What a notion! This unfrocked Unitarian minister has almost affirmed that our crimes themselves might be the living stones that will serve to construct the temples of the true God! Who is the head of the school that makes of its philosophy what its disciple makes of his novels: a curious research, a continuous experiment that arrives at no conclusion but tries everything, that plays fast and loose with the facts, never holding one as sacred or profane? What is the doctrine known to its followers as the philosophy of circles? Does not Miriam practice Transcendentalism when she says, in one of the last chapters, while speaking of Donatello: “‘So changed, yet still, in a deeper sense, so much the same! He has travelled in a circle, as all things heavenly and earthly do, and now comes back to his original self, with an inestimable treasure of improvement won from an experience of pain’” (\textit{MF} 434).

We have already observed that Hawthorne’s new book, unlike most of its predecessors, stamped with the hallmark of Puritanism, is a novel penetrated completely by philosophy. We need only look at the story’s conclusion to see this. The separation of Miriam from Donatello is not irrevocable, and the barrier of evil that is erected between them begins to weaken as Donatello’s torment subsides, and it falls altogether when he feels reconciled to the moral law. After having lived sad and alone in his tower in the Appenines (at the foot of which there is a precipice that serves as a constant reminder of his crime), after spending time finding ways to ease his pain by becoming more cognizant of moral distinctions, he encounters Miriam in Perugia, at the foot of a statue of Pope Julius II.\textsuperscript{29} The warrior pontiff, extending his hand in a venerable gesture, awakens only feelings of peace and rest in the viewer’s soul. He is a bronze pontiff, but one who blesses. With a lively and passionate imagination, Miriam has chosen this meeting spot deliberately: she believes that a benign relief to her suffering will fall from his paternal
hand. To the same spot, Kenyon brings Donatello (an Italian, raised in the Catholic faith), who kneels at the foot of this bronze confessor. When he raises his eyes, he notices Miriam on her knees like him. Like him, she has come to seek justification, and the hand that extends upon them seems to oblige in according it to them. The barrier has fallen: Donatello and Miriam are reunited in absolution.

To be sure, there is nothing Puritan in this. One might say that their confessional is theatrical decoration, and the priest a simple statue. But there is another confession in the novel, and that one takes place in one of the stalls in Saint Peter’s. A good father, in surplice, is seated behind his screen, and a young woman on her knees speaks into his ear. It is a young American Protestant, Hilda, Miriam’s friend, who was the involuntary and unforeseen witness to the crime. The crime that she has witnessed, though she has taken no part in it, has weighed upon her; and the remorse of innocence, the burden of truth (described in some of the novel’s best pages) can only be relieved for her by cleansing in the waters of penitence. Is the author of Transformation favorable to Catholicism?

We do not believe so. In a previous study of the anonymous author of Scenes of Clerical Life and Adam Bede, we have seen that confession occupies an important place in these books, and yet we find no trace there of any Catholic leanings. For this there were reasons: not only was the writer a woman, as we surmised, but she is also a person whose friends (the editors of The Westminster Review) appear to be more attached to certain philosophical doctrines than to a particular church. Hawthorne, in his own right, has produced some remarkable effects with this idea of confession. He has come to it by way of philosophy, and, more specifically, by that philosophy named for the Doctrine of Circles. By following his own path, Donatello has found along the way the redemptive power of evil. “Be true”—these two words encompass all the practical morality of Emerson and his disciples. Be true—do not hide the wound at your core if you want to heal. Be true—these are also the last words of The Scarlet Letter, and Dimmesdale, the adulterous minister, ends his life with a public confession.

When Donatello discovers the easing of conscience, the book ends abruptly. It does not matter to the author if his hero surrenders to the penalty of civil law. He does not pain himself to fix the destiny of his characters. What good is it to fret about the social reality of this story? Since it involves the metamorphosis of a faun into a man, the question of his marriage or of his dying heirless is really secondary, and we do not really feel a strong need to learn if the mysterious Miriam becomes the Countess of Monte Beni. The true denouement is in this double philosophical morality:
Either Donatello, made for happiness, comes to understand that human life is something sad and serious, and that men like him must change or perish like antediluvian beings whose existence required a more tropical climate than our own;

Or Donatello, an instinctive and unreflective nature, commits a crime, after which remorse, with its sharp fangs, awakens his slumbering soul, and, with it, a thousand faculties he himself has never imagined. Evil instructs him, raises him. Evil, that blackness spread out across the world, and which horrifies us—could it be, like pain, a simple element of education, through which we rise to a higher and purer state?

Choose between the two explanations, or even take both of them. They both come back to the same doctrine, whose name we have known since Spinoza. This doctrine, watchfully repressed by philosophy, apparently has taken recourse in all forms of literature. Poets, novelists and critics are becoming great philosophers. Literary pantheism is in fashion. If it means replacing Apollo by a God of Nature, and the secret influence of the classic school by immanence, where is the harm? Since it is necessary to admit that contemporary literature does not recommend itself through its treasures of the imagination or its excesses of refinement, we are grateful for anything that seems a new ideal, anything that makes an idea stir under rude and material facts, anything that relieves us from the brutal art of Realism by giving us brushstrokes that make us dream. With the benefit of these reservations, even though human realities please us more, we believe the book Transformation worthy of the talent of its author, and we recognize it as one of the most curious signs of the time.

Revue européenne (Nov. 1860)

Notes

1. From the poem “Le satyre” in Victor Hugo’s La légende des siècles (Brussels: Hetzel, 1851).

2. In the Ars Poetica, Horace insisted that scenes of graphic violence be kept offstage in order to maintain the noble decorum appropriate to classical tragedy. His broader aesthetic principle was that different styles and genres should be kept discrete. Here Étienne quotes the last of four lines in which Horace admonishes:

   For as a matron, on our festal days
   Obliged to dance, with modest grace obeys,
   So should the Muse her dignity maintain
   Amidst the satyrs, and their wanton train.
3. Goethe’s poem celebrates the return of spring and the promise of love it portends, but also worries about its ephemeral nature:

I come! I come!
To where? Oh, to where?
Upwards, upwards the urge,
The clouds are floating
Downwards, the clouds
Lower themselves towards yearning love,
To me, me!
In your lap
Upwards,
Embracing embraced!
Upwards
Upon your breast,
All-loving Father.


4. That is, *The Marble Faun*; as noted in chapter IX, the London firm of Smith, Elder & Co. published Hawthorne’s 1860 novel under this title; in America, Ticknor & Fields issued it as *The Marble Faun; or, The Romance of Monte Beni*, which the author much preferred.


7. Étienne’s note: “From Émile Montégut’s translation, *Essais de philosophie américaine*, by Ralph Waldo Emerson (Paris: Charpentier, 1851) [47].” The full text from Emerson’s essay “Art” reads:

When I came at last to Rome, and saw with eyes the pictures, I found that genius left to novices the gay and fantastic and ostentatious, and itself pierced directly to the simple and true; that it was familiar and sincere; that it was the old, eternal fact I had met already in so many forms, unto which I lived; that it was the plain you and me I knew so well, had left at home in so many conversations. I had the same experience already in a church at Naples. There I saw that nothing was changed with me but the place, and said to myself, “Thou foolish child, hast thou come out hither, over four thousand miles of salt water, to find that which was perfect to thee there at home?” that fact I saw again in the Academmia at Naples, in the chambers of sculpture, and yet again when I came to Rome, and to the paintings of Raphael, Angelo, Sacchi, Titian, and Leonardo da Vinci. “What, old mole! workest thou in the earth so fast?” It had travelled by my side: that which I fancied I had left in Boston was here in the Vatican, and again at Milan, and at Paris, and made all travelling ridiculous as a treadmill.

*(Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson 2: 214–15)*

8. Novalis, or Georg Philipp Friedrich Freiherr von Hardenberg (1772–1801), a phi-
losopher of German Romanticism, spoke these words about Dutch philosopher Spinoza (1632–77).


10. In Goethe’s *Faust* (Part II), the sorcerer’s former student, Wagner, creates a homunculus, who then converses extensively with Mephistopheles.


12. Pietro Metastasio (1698–1782) and Petrarch (1304–72), famous Italian poets known for verses about love.

13. Judith is a biblical figure who beheaded the Assyrian general Holofernes (Judith 13).

14. A reference to the beheading of John the Baptist at the request of Herodias, a Jewish princess (Matthew 14:6–11).

15. Étienne cites the second stanza of Emerson’s “Woodnotes I” from Émile Montégut’s Introduction to his 1851 translation of Emerson’s *Essays*. Montégut translates the lines in the form of a prose paragraph. See *Essais de philosophie américaine, de R. W. Emerson, traduits de l’anglais par E. Montégut, avec une introduction et des notes* (Paris: Charpentier, 1851), xxvii.

16. Aeneas, Trojan hero and founder of Rome, was the son of Aphrodite, Greek goddess of love, and a human prince, Anchises. Romulus, the founder of Rome, was said to be the son of a human woman and the god of war, Mars.

17. An ancient region of central Italy.

18. Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–75), an early Italian Renaissance poet and author, wrote *Ameto, or Comedia delle ninfe fiorentine*, in 1341.

19. Étienne refers to the so-called Austrian lip (a thick under-lip), a prominent facial feature of the House of Hapsburgs.

20. A Persian monarch who assumed the throne under false pretences; his ears had been cut off as a punishment for heinous offenses, and when his deformity and true identity were discovered, he was slain by Darius.


22. Italian pipes, similar to bagpipes, used to accompany traditional dances.

23. In recounting the legend of “The Silvery Veil,” Zenobia refers to “a knot of visionary people, who were seeking for the better life” and then again to a “knot of visionary transcendentalists, who were still seeking for the better life” (Centenary Edition, vol. III, *The Blithedale Romance*, edited by Fredson Bowers et al., 114–15).

24. The last part of this quotation is from Spinoza’s *Ethics*, Part 4, Proposition 67: “A free man thinks of death least of all things; and his wisdom is a meditation not of death but of life.”


26. Lotte, a young girl engaged to another, who is Werther’s love interest; despairing of Lotte, he commits suicide.


29. The statue in Perugia is actually of Julius III (1487–1555). Julius II (1443–1513) was known as “the Warrior Pope.”

30. Both *Scenes of Clerical Life* (1858) and *Adam Bede* (1859) were written by George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans [1819–80]).

31. Étienne’s note: “Miss [Mary Ann] Evans [George Eliot], as shown by other commentators.”


33. Though not literally the last words of the novel, Hawthorne does summarize its meaning this way: “Among many morals which press upon us from the poor minister’s miserable experience, we put only this into a sentence:—‘Be true! Be true! Show freely to the world, if not your worst, yet some trait whereby the worst may be inferred!’” (Centenary Edition, vol. I, *The Scarlet Letter*, edited by Fredson Bowers and Matthew J. Bruccoli, 260).