



外语教学指导与学术研究系列丛书

# The Brief Analysis of American Famous Writers' Masterworks

# 美国文学 名家名作简析

◎ 张 杰 刘香溪 丁晓明 王建光 黄 吟 编著

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# 前言

《美国文学名家名作简析》是集美国近现代五位著名作家的名篇、作家生平概述和每篇名作的英文赏析与导读于一体的，有助于提高读者文学鉴赏力的书籍。此书的编撰可以帮助广大文学爱好者，特别是美国文学爱好者把握近现代美国文学发展动态，提高文学分析与批评能力，进而了解美国现当代的文化与社会。

《美国文学名家名作简析》共涵盖三个部分：（1）作家概述；（2）作品赏析与评论；（3）作品原文。该书多选自美国近现代名家名篇，它们贴近生活，内容丰富，语言通俗易懂，时代感强。该书的编撰，具有作者一定的个人见解，以期与读者共勉。

作者  
2015年8月

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## Nathaniel Hawthorne

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### 1. The Introduction of Nathaniel Hawthorne

Nathaniel Hawthorne, a world famous American writer, is good at reflecting on humanity and exposing the dark side of human society in his novels and short stories. From time to time, Hawthorne exposes the greed and hypocrisy in human mind. At the same time, he condemns the evil of puritan community. His constant theme: the original sin and morality can be interpreted in a variety of his novels and short stories. In Hawthorne's works, we can see he favors using symbolic style to present his theme and makes his works very readable. Hawthorne also likes to employ a lot of ironies to make his criticism of the ugliness of humanity.

Nathaniel Hawthorne was born in Salem in 1804, a small town in Massachusetts. Once his family was an influential puritan family in New England, and one of his ancestors was a judge of the famous "The Trial of Twelve Wizards were burned to death." As a little child witnessing the atrocity given by the ancestors, Hawthorne was guilty of the crime his

ancestors committed. So he inserted a letter “w” into his surname, which stands for “wick” and “weird.” The quest for “morality” and reproaching human being’s crime became the topic and subject of his novels.

Hawthorne’s father was a sea captain, who died at young age. Hawthorne’s family made a living on his relatives’ aid. Hawthorne determined to live up by himself, thus he entered in Bowdoin College where he finished his first novel *Fanshawe*, and made friends with such celebrities as Franklin Pierce, the 14th American president and the famous American romantic poet Longfellow. After his graduation, Hawthorne came back into his hometown, collecting lots of materials for his novel writing from farmers, housewives and woodmen. In 1837, Hawthorne published his first collection of short stories *Twice-told Tales*. But this work could not make a profit for him. Therefore, he went to Boston, working in the custom house. Eight years later, Hawthorne came back to Salem, becoming a surveyor of the custom house there. In 1850, his masterpiece *The Scarlet Letter* came out. This novel made a great success. After that Hawthorne anchored several works including *The House of Seven Gables* (1857), *The Blithedale Romance* (1852) and his second collection of short stories *The Mosses from the Old House*. His friend President Pierce appointed him the Liverpool consul, and he went to Europe. In 1860, Hawthorne returned to his country and died in 1864.

Hawthorne creates many different characters in his novels and short stories, but they have much common in guilt of morality. He depicts his protagonist’s mental activities and unfolds their interior world to readers. So Hawthorne’s universal themes, psychological analysis, as well as his symbolic style are all highlights of his works.

## 2. Comment on *Rappaccini's Daughter*

Nathaniel Hawthorne is a well-known short story writer. His short stories are noted for his consistent theme: evil and morality. The author likes to uncover the crime in protagonist's mind and expose the original sin committed by the protagonist in his stories. In addition to his remarkable theme, Hawthorne takes interest in rendering the ambiguity of the scenes. His descriptive words and eccentric plots make his stories fantastic for readers. From his many short stories we can perceive those features of Hawthorne's short stories. *Rappaccini's Daughter* is a case in point.

*Rappaccini's Daughter* is one of Hawthorne's noteworthy short stories. It tells the protagonist, Rappaccini who is absorbed in scientific study of plants. His speculation in science is made at the mercy of his morality and human consciousness, thus his daughter—the beautiful Beatrice reduced to his subject and died. It is evident that Hawthorne intends to condemn the loss of the protagonist's morality and human consciousness through Doctor Rappaccini's story.

Many years ago, a medicine student Giovanni Guasconti from a distant place came to the town, where Doctor Rappaccini lived, renting an attic of one of Doctor's neighbors. Giovanni's attic is just opposite to Rappaccini's beautiful garden. He can cover the scene of the garden everyday. In doctor's garden, there are a variety kinds of colorful flowers blooming. The eccentric shapes of plants can be seen everywhere. As a medical student, Giovanni knows of every kind of flowers and names of them. However, he can't get to know any flower here. One day, Giovanni



is looking out of the window; he suddenly catches sight of a middle-aged man who is handsome, behaving like a gentleman. The man is checking his plants; but he only watches these flowers and plants very carefully with his eyes, never touching any of them. When there appears a pretty young lady besides the man, she is crying “Dad.” The beauty of the young lady attracts Giovanni’s attention. Giovanni’s landlord tells him the man is the owner of the garden, who is a famous physician. The pretty lady is his only daughter Beatrice. From that time, Giovanni senses that he has fallen in love with pretty Beatrice and attempts to pay a visit to the doctor’s mysterious garden. One day he passes by a florist’s shop and buys a bunch of flowers. Arriving at home, he immediately comes near to the window waiting for his lover in mind—Beatrice’s appearing. No sooner later, Beatrice enters the garden and picks up one of the most beautiful flowers. Giovanni finds out an unexpected thing happens; a small worm crawls near to the feet of Beatrice, the juice of the flower in Beatrice’s hand drops to the worm; it twists for a little time and stays there, unmoving. Then there appears another unexpected phenomenon. Giovanni can’t help crying which wakes up Beatrice’s attention. Since then, Giovanni manages to get close to the doctor’s garden. By accident, he discovers a secret door leading to the doctor’s garden. He is glad to come into it. Giovanni is observing the mysterious plant when he makes glimpse of Beatrice’s coming. They are chatting, over walking and come into the grove of the flowers. Giovanni is reaching his hand to the flower blooming. To his surprise, Beatrice pulls his arm, crying “Don’t touch them.” Then she is running away.

In the following morning, Giovanni is feeling pain on the arm; he at once checks it up and finds there appears a purple hand print on the arm

which gets touched by Beatrice. Giovanni's love for Beatrice makes him forget the wound left on his arm. They make several appointments, becoming lovers. One day, Giovanni buys another bunch of flowers to present Beatrice. Before his departure, he takes notice that the flower withers in his hand. Next he spits at a spider on the wall, the spider dies immediately. Giovanni pays a visit to a famous professor to get the answer. The professor tells an old legend about how an Indian prince sent a beauty as a gift to King Alexander III. The beautiful girl could swallow and spit fragrance in her mouth because she has been fed up by poison. The fragrance from her breath can cause a man's death. After finishing his story, the professor makes sure that "Doctor experiments in new poison by treating her daughter as subject. And I'm sure that he wants to make you as a new subject." The professor fishes a small bottle, and says there is antidote he has just developed recently. Giovanni gets very angry, and he quests for why she tries her best to do harm to him, an innocent young man. Beatrice admits to the fact she is a terrible subject of the medicine study, but she denies she wants to harm Giovanni. When she finds a swarm of insects drop to the ground and die when they are flying near Giovanni, she comes to know her father's trick. Giovanni divides the antidote into half. Both of them drink it up. Giovanni is saved but Beatrice soon dies because Beatrice's body has been altered by his father's poison. The antidote sends her to her grave. The story has a tragic ending. It seems that Hawthorne tries to uncover the essence of Doctor's evil scientific study—an utterly devilry.

### 3. Reading of *Rappaccini's Daughter*

A young man, named Giovanni Guasconti, came, very long ago, from the more southern region of Italy, to pursue his studies at the University of Padua. Giovanni, who had but a scanty supply of gold ducats in his pocket, took lodgings in a high and gloomy chamber of an old edifice, which looked not unworthy to have been the palace of a Paduan noble, and which, in fact, exhibited over its entrance the armorial bearings of a family long since extinct. The young stranger, who was not unstudied in the great poem of his country, recollected that one of the ancestors of this family, and perhaps an occupant of this very mansion, had been pictured by Dante as a partaker of the immortal agonies of his *Inferno*. These reminiscences and associations, together with the tendency to heart-break natural to a young man for the first time out of his native sphere, caused Giovanni to sigh heavily, as he looked around the desolate and ill-furnished apartment.

"Holy Virgin, signor," cried old dame Lisabetta, who, won by the youth's remarkable beauty of person, was kindly endeavoring to give the chamber a habitable air, "what a sigh was that to come out of a young man's heart! Do you find this old mansion gloomy? For the love of heaven, then, put your head out of the window, and you will see as bright sunshine as you have left in Naples."

Guasconti mechanically did as the old woman advised, but could not quite agree with her that the Lombard sunshine was as cheerful as that of southern Italy. Such as it was, however, it fell upon a garden beneath the window, and expended its fostering influences on a variety of plants, which seemed to have been cultivated with exceeding care.

"Does this garden belong to the house?" asked Giovanni.

"Heaven forbid, signor! —unless it were fruitful of better pot-herbs than any that grow there now," answered old Lisabetta. "No; that garden is cultivated by the own hands of Signor Giacomo Rappaccini, the famous Doctor, who, I warrant him, has been heard of as far as Naples. It is said he distils these plants into medicines that are as potent as a charm. Oftentimes you may see the Signor Doctor at work, and perchance the Signora his daughter, too, gathering the strange flowers that grow in the garden."

The old woman had now done what she could for the aspect of the chamber, and, commending the young man to the protection of the saints, took her departure.

Giovanni still found no better occupation than to look down into the garden beneath his window. From its appearance, he judged it to be one of those botanic gardens, which were of earlier date in Padua than elsewhere in Italy, or in the world. Or, not improbably, it might once have been the pleasure-place of an opulent family; for there was the ruin of a marble fountain in the centre, sculptured with rare art, but so wofully shattered that it was impossible to trace the original design from the chaos of remaining fragments. The water, however, continued to gush and sparkle into the sunbeams as cheerfully as ever. A little gurgling sound ascended to the young man's window, and made him feel as if a fountain were an immortal spirit, that sung its song unceasingly, and without heeding the vicissitudes around it; while one century embodied it in marble, and another scattered the perishable garniture on the soil. All about the pool into which the water subsided, grew various plants, that seemed to require a plentiful supply of moisture for the nourishment of

gigantic leaves, and, in some instances, flowers gorgeously magnificent. There was one shrub in particular, set in a marble vase in the midst of the pool, that bore a profusion of purple blossoms, each of which had the lustre and richness of a gem; and the whole together made a show so resplendent that it seemed enough to illuminate the garden, even had there been no sunshine. Every portion of the soil was peopled with plants and herbs, which, if less beautiful, still bore tokens of assiduous care; as if all had their individual virtues, known to the scientific mind that fostered them. Some were placed in urns, rich with old carving, and others in common garden-pots; some crept serpent-like along the ground, or climbed on high, using whatever means of ascent was offered them. One plant had wreathed itself round a statue of Vertumnus, which was thus quite veiled and shrouded in a drapery of hanging foliage, so happily arranged that it might have served a sculptor for a study.

While Giovanni stood at the window, he heard a rustling behind a screen of leaves, and became aware that a person was at work in the garden. His figure soon emerged into view, and showed itself to be that of no common laborer, but a tall, emaciated, sallow, and sickly looking man, dressed in a scholar's garb of black. He was beyond the middle term of life, with gray hair, a thin gray beard, and a face singularly marked with intellect and cultivation, but which could never, even in his more youthful days, have expressed much warmth of heart.

Nothing could exceed the intentness with which this scientific gardener examined every shrub which grew in his path; it seemed as if he was looking into their inmost nature, making observations in regard to their creative essence, and discovering why one leaf grew in this shape, and another in that, and wherefore such and such flowers differed among

themselves in hue and perfume. Nevertheless, in spite of the deep intelligence on his part, there was no approach to intimacy between himself and these vegetable existences. On the contrary, he avoided their actual touch, or the direct inhaling of their odors, with a caution that impressed Giovanni most disagreeably; for the man's demeanor was that of one walking among malignant influences, such as savage beasts, or deadly snakes, or evil spirits, which, should he allow them one moment of license, would wreak upon him some terrible fatality. It was strangely frightful to the young man's imagination, to see this air of insecurity in a person cultivating a garden, that most simple and innocent of human toils, and which had been alike the joy and labor of the unfallen parents of the race. Was this garden, then, the Eden of the present world? — and this man, with such a perception of harm in what his own hands caused to grow, was he the Adam?

The distrustful gardener, while plucking away the dead leaves or pruning the too luxuriant growth of the shrubs, defended his hands with a pair of thick gloves. Nor were these his only armor. When, in his walk through the garden, he came to the magnificent plant that hung its purple gems beside the marble fountain, he placed a kind of mask over his mouth and nostrils, as if all this beauty did but conceal a deadlier malice. But finding his task still too dangerous, he drew back, removed the mask, and called loudly, but in the infirm voice of a person affected with inward disease:

“Beatrice! —Beatrice!”

“Here am I, my father! What would you?” cried a rich and youthful voice from the window of the opposite house; a voice as rich as a tropical sunset, and which made Giovanni, though he knew not why, think of

deep hues of purple or crimson, and of perfumes heavily delectable. —  
“Are you in the garden?”

“Yes, Beatrice,” answered the gardener, “and I need your help.”

Soon there emerged from under a sculptured portal the figure of a young girl, arrayed with as much richness of taste as the most splendid of the flowers, beautiful as the day, and with a bloom so deep and vivid that one shade more would have been too much. She looked redundant with life, health, and energy; all of which attributes were bound down and compressed, as it were, and girdled tensely, in their luxuriance, by her virgin zone. Yet Giovanni's fancy must have grown morbid, while he looked down into the garden; for the impression which the fair stranger made upon him was as if here were another flower, the human sister of those vegetable ones, as beautiful as they—more beautiful than the richest of them—but still to be touched only with a glove, nor to be approached without a mask. As Beatrice came down the garden-path, it was observable that she handled and inhaled the odor of several of the plants, which her father had most sedulously avoided.

“Here, Beatrice,” said the latter,—“see how many needful offices require to be done to our chief treasure. Yet, shattered as I am, my life might pay the penalty of approaching it so closely as circumstances demand. Henceforth, I fear, this plant must be consigned to your sole charge.”

“And gladly will I undertake it,” cried again the rich tones of the young lady, as she bent towards the magnificent plant, and opened her arms as if to embrace it. “Yes, my sister, my splendor, it shall be Beatrice's task to nurse and serve thee; and thou shalt reward her with thy kisses and perfume breath, which to her is as the breath of life!”

Then, with all the tenderness in her manner that was so strikingly expressed in her words, she busied herself with such attentions as the plant seemed to require; and Giovanni, at his lofty window, rubbed his eyes, and almost doubted whether it were a girl tending her favorite flower, or one sister performing the duties of affection to another. The scene soon terminated. Whether Doctor Rappaccini had finished his labors in the garden, or that his watchful eye had caught the stranger's face, he now took his daughter's arm and retired. Night was already closing in; oppressive exhalations seemed to proceed from the plants, and steal upward past the open window; and Giovanni, closing the lattice, went to his couch, and dreamed of a rich flower and beautiful girl. Flower and maiden were different and yet the same, and fraught with some strange peril in either shape.

But there is an influence in the light of morning that tends to rectify whatever errors of fancy, or even of judgment, we may have incurred during the sun's decline, or among the shadows of the night, or in the less wholesome glow of moonshine. Giovanni's first movement on starting from sleep, was to throw open the window, and gaze down into the garden which his dreams had made so fertile of mysteries. He was surprised, and a little ashamed, to find how real and matter-of-fact an affair it proved to be, in the first rays of the sun, which gilded the dew-drops that hung upon leaf and blossom, and, while giving a brighter beauty to each rare flower, brought everything within the limits of ordinary experience. The young man rejoiced, that, in the heart of the barren city, he had the privilege of overlooking this spot of lovely and luxuriant vegetation. It would serve, he said to himself, as a symbolic language, to keep him in communion with Nature. Neither the sickly and thought-worn Doctor



Giacomo Rappaccini, it is true, nor his brilliant daughter, were now visible; so that Giovanni could not determine how much of the singularity which he attributed to both, was due to their own qualities, and how much to his wonder-working fancy. But he was inclined to take a most rational view of the whole matter.

In the course of the day, he paid his respects to Signor Pietro Baglioni, Professor of Medicine in the University, a physician of eminent repute, to whom Giovanni had brought a letter of introduction. The Professor was an elderly personage, apparently of genial nature, and habits that might almost be called jovial; he kept the young man to dinner, and made himself very agreeable by the freedom and liveliness of his conversation, especially when warmed by a flask or two of Tuscan wine. Giovanni, conceiving that men of science, inhabitants of the same city, must needs be on familiar terms with one another, took an opportunity to mention the name of Doctor Rappaccini. But the Professor did not respond with so much cordiality as he had anticipated.

"I'll would it become a teacher of the divine art of medicine," said Professor Pietro Baglioni, in answer to a question of Giovanni, "to withhold due and well-considered praise of a physician so eminently skilled as Rappaccini. But, on the other hand, I should answer it but scantily to my conscience, were I to permit a worthy youth like yourself, Signor Giovanni, the son of an ancient friend, to imbibe erroneous ideas respecting a man who might hereafter chance to hold your life and death in his hands. The truth is, our worshipful Doctor Rappaccini has as much science as any member of the faculty—with perhaps one single exception—in Padua, or all Italy. But there are certain grave objections to his professional character."