

THE SINS OF THE FATHERS: Hawthorne's Psychological Themes. By Frederick C. Crews. New York: Oxford University Press. 1966. \$6.75.

This psychological analysis of Hawthorne's themes attacks the "American Studies approach" to Hawthorne as romancer of colonial American history and the "neo-Christian approach" to Hawthorne as serene moralist. Crews' thesis is that Hawthorne was obsessed with unresolved Oedipal feelings which manifested themselves in literary fantasies of filial hatred, parricide and incest. His Oedipal compulsion explains, as no other approach does, the narrowness of Hawthorne's themes and character types. Full of high intelligence and admirable restraint, this book still suffers from the dangers of critical monism. Reducing the rich complexity of a major artist to the formula of (in this case) Freudian criticism does little justice to Hawthorne's varied artistry.

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THE NEW ENGLAND CONSCIENCE.

By Austin Warren. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. 1966. \$6.00.

Unusually informal, this is a graceful and thoughtful examination of the sense of conscience in William Bradford, John Winthrop, Roger Williams, Michael Wigglesworth, Cotton Mather, Jonathan Edwards, Thoreau, William Lloyd Garrison, Hawthorne, James, Mary E. Wilkins, Henry Adams, Edwin Arlington Robinson and then the heroes of two novels, John Marquand's The Late George Apley and George Santyana's The Last Puritan. A disarmingly casual structure fails to conceal the themes recurring in the figures discussed, nor does the conversational tone hide the scholarly solidity of the author's preparation. Good seminars sometimes produce conversation of this quality. Much of The New England Conscience has the appearance of a carefully edited transcription of the best parts of a series of related discussions, in which the stated subject is always present, but the best insights often come at unexpected angles spontaneously from the reactions of the brightest participants. Since Mr. Warren says that the book grew out of lectures and seminars, this is a bit more than conjecture.

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