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Conversation -- The Bipolar Dynamics of Holmes' Household Dialogues: levity and gravity -- Holmes' House Divided: house-keeping and house-breaking -- "Cutting off the Communication": fixations and falls for the walled-in-self- Holmes in dialogue with Sterne, Dickens, and Melville -- Breaking the House of Romance: Holmes in dialogue with Hawthorne -- Closing the Conversation -- Conclusion: Holmes Senior in dialogue with Holmes Junior.

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Sommario/riassunto

Peter Gibian explores the key role played by Oliver Wendell Holmes in what was known as America's 'Age of Conversation'. He was both a model and an analyst of the dynamic conversational form, which became central to many areas of mid-nineteenth-century life. Holmes' multivoiced writings can serve as a key to open up the closed interiors of Victorian America, whether in saloons or salons, parlours or clubs, hotels or boarding-houses, schoolrooms or doctors' offices. Combining social, intellectual, medical, legal and literary history with close textual analysis, and setting Holmes in dialogue with Emerson, Hawthorne, Melville, Fuller, Alcott and finally with his son, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Junior, Gibian radically redefines the context for our understanding of the major literary works of the American Renaissance.

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