Fall 2018

Cultural and Narrative Shifts of Nineteenth Century Children's Literature in Hawthorne's Wonder Book for Girls and Boys

Kristen Clark Brandt
Western Kentucky University, kristen@triofarms.com

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CULTURAL AND NARRATIVE SHIFTS OF NINETEENTH CENTURY CHILDREN’S LITERATURE IN HAWTHORNE’S WONDER BOOK FOR GIRLS AND BOYS

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of Folk Studies
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

By
Kristen Clark

December 2018
CULTURAL AND NARRATIVE SHIFTS OF NINETEENTH CENTURY CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN HAWTHORNE'S WONDER BOOK FOR GIRLS AND BOYS

Date Recommended  4 October 2018

Erika Brady, Director of Thesis

Timothy Evans

David Miller

Cheryl O. Davé  11/5/18
Dean, Graduate Studies and Research  Date
I dedicate this thesis to my parents, Jan and Monty Clark who supported me throughout this endeavor, to Joshua Brandt who was a source of constant encouragement, and to Erika Brady without whom this would not have been possible.
AKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to acknowledge the members of my thesis committee for their insight and guidance throughout the process of writing this thesis. Dr. David Miller from Mississippi College whose experience with American Literature and sharp eye were an invaluable part in the development of this project. Dr. Timothy Evans assisted in the interdisciplinary approach to the study of folklore and literature. I would also like to thank the many other faculty members who have prepared me in classroom and professional experience: Ann Ferrell, Brent Bjorkman, Kate Horigan, and Michael Ann Williams. Last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank Dr. Erika Brady who was integral in shaping the ideas presented here and getting them written on paper.
CONTENTS

Introduction .............................................................................................................................................. 1

Chapter 1: Mythmaking in Nineteenth Century America ................................................................. 12

Chapter 2: “Translating Myth”: From Classical to Romantic ......................................................... 31

Chapter 3: “Between the Imaginary and the Real:” Performance in the Pedagogy of Storytelling ................................................................................................................................. 46

Conclusion ............................................................................................................................................. 55

References ............................................................................................................................................ 57
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1. Hiram Powers, *America* (1848-1850)………………………………………………..15

Figure 2. Horatio Greenough’s, *The Ascension of a Child Conducted by an Infant Angel* (1833)……………………………………………………………………………41

Figure 3. Seymour Joseph Guy, *Unconscious of Danger* (1865)…………………..42

Figure 4: Eva teaches Tom to read. …………………………………………………………..43
Both folklorists and literary critics have been drawn to Nathaniel Hawthorne’s body of work because of his distinctive style and incorporation of folk motifs. Such motif-spotting presents no challenge in Hawthorne’s juvenile literature like his retellings from Greek mythology in *Wonder Book for Girls and Boys*; however, contemporary folklore redirects the focus of this scholarship to “how particular literary uses of folklore fit into a larger, more fundamental concept of what folklore is and how and what folklore communicates” (de Caro & Jordan 2015:15). Hawthorne’s work interacts with other forms of cultural expression in the nineteenth century such as dominant cultural narratives and artwork to transform the classical narratives in *Wonder Book for Girls and Boys* into narratives that reflect customs in conversational discourse and childrearing practice.
Introduction

Folklorists have long recognized the proliferation of folk motifs in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s literature. One of the most vivid examples is the so-called “bosom serpent” stories to which Gillian Bennett devotes an entire chapter of her book *Bodies*. The Bosom Serpent is a motif that centers on the “belief that animals, especially reptiles and amphibians, could enter and be nourished in the body and cause disease” (Bennett 2005:22). Bennet notes that, while Bosom Serpent stories have been around since the twelfth century, their contemporary label derives from Hawthorne’s 1843 story “Egotism” also titled “The Bosom Serpent.” Jane Garry and Hasan El-Shamy also highlight Hawthorne’s use of motifs in “Young Goodman Brown,” *The Marble Faun*, and “The Snow Image” in *Archetypes and Motifs in Folklore and Literature*.

As some of these titles would suggest, the motifs utilized by Hawthorne perform crucial roles in their narratives. For example, the story titled “The Birthmark” alludes to the only flaw on Georgiana, wife of Aylmer the scientist, which appears as if “some fairy at her birth hour had laid her tiny hand upon the infant’s cheek” ([1843] 1996:765). These experiments to remove the mark consumed Aylmer who eventually coerces his wife to consent to a procedure. Although it achieves its goal of removing the mark, the experiment kills Georgiana. Hawthorne’s polarity between the fairy-touched Georgiana and the controlling scientist Aylmer conceptually situates “The Birthmark” within the Romantic movement where the opposition of nature and science is a common theme. Hawthorne’s literary and historical context shape his use of folklore in his
short stories and novels; however, little attention has been paid to how this works out in his most ostensive use of folk narrative: his adaptation of Greek myths, *The Wonder Book for Girls and Boys.*

Published in 1851, Hawthorne’s *Wonder Book* became one of the first attempts to retell classical mythology with children as the main audience. *Wonder Book* was an immediate success, selling more than four thousand copies by November 1851; in comparison, Melville’s *Moby-Dick* sold under eighteen hundred copies in the first year. Other writers such as Thomas Bulfinch, Ingri and Edwin Parin D’Aulaire, and Edith Nesbit would follow Hawthorne’s success. Hawthorne himself revisited his success with a sequel entitled *Tanglewood Tales,* another collection of retold classical narratives. The body of *Wonder Book* consists of six episodes from classical mythology which are bookended by a narrative frame populated by the narrator Eustace Bright and his audience, a bouquet of children with names like Dandelion, Blue Eye, Buttercup, and Primrose. The narratives are divided between three “hero tales” and three “domestic tales” which may reflect the book’s intended audience of both boys and girls. Like most young gentleman, Hawthorne’s education exposed him to Latin and other classical works such as Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and Virgil’s *Aeneid.* In his letters, however, Hawthorne indicates a deliberately non-classical source: Charles Anthon’s *A New Classical Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography, Geography, and Mythology,* indicating a lack of concern for the primary sources of his mythic recreations.
Hawthorne makes his intentions with *Wonder Book* clear in his preface stating:

No epoch of time can claim a copyright in these immortal fables. They never seem to be made; and certainly, so long as man exists, they can never perish; but, by their indestructibility itself, they are legitimate subjects for every age to clothe with its own garniture of manners and sentiment, and to imbue with its own morality. In this present version, they may have...assumed a Gothic or romantic guise. ([1851] 1996:1163)

Both this source information and his preface to *Wonder Book* show that fidelity to an “original” source was not his concern, nor did he have any save-from-the-fire motivation as he cites the fables’ “indestructibility.” Instead, Hawthorne’s endeavor is one of American mythmaking. By building an intrinsically American variant from European roots, Hawthorne participates in the established system of cultural importation from Europe in the nineteenth century; however, Hawthorne’s renderings lose their European flavor as he imbues them with uniquely American sentiment. In the *Handbook of American Folklore*, David Marcell indicates that in studying a culture’s literary expression the folklorists and “the interpreter of literary fables . . . both seek to establish the artifact in context . . . establish the meaning of the artifact” within the context, process, and cultural use. Hawthorne’s retellings for children are imbued with Americans’ early sense of self and the building of national identity through engaging the new generations with a literature that transmits cultural values. The materials for these retellings must be
reshaped for its intended audience to be commercially successful, so early juvenile literature can reveal much about contemporary adult’s perception of children and preoccupations with childhood. Because of this, Hawthorne’s literature for children can be used as a lens through which to understand the formation of cultural ideals, values, and childhood in the developing American identity.

Favoring a holistic approach, I have selected literary, historical, and folkloric sources to develop connections between early American culture and Hawthorne’s children’s literature. The first establishes a historical context and a review of the developing American identity and examines the connections between early American folk heroes and cultural myths and Hawthorne’s *Wonder Book* particularly within the hero episodes. The second chapter explores the translation of classical narrative into the contemporary romantic style and the implications of this style shift in the nineteenth century understanding of childhood. The final chapter focuses on the stylistic and structural aspects of *Wonder Book*, particularly how Hawthorne reshapes the genre of the narrative, and his use of the literary frame as a performance context.

The first chapter concentrates on the development of American identity, values and mythmaking using texts like Richard Dorson’s *America in Legend*, selections from Dorson’s *Handbook of American Folklore* and Theodore Gross’s *The Heroic Ideal in American Literature*. They are accompanied by biographies of Nathaniel Hawthorne such as Brenda Wineapple’s *Hawthorne: A Life* to situate the author within that early American context. The inclusion of these biographies
also highlights some key subversions in *Wonder Book* that indicate some of Hawthorne’s criticisms of his contemporary culture. This chapter ends with an examination of folk heroes in the early national period such as Davy Crockett, Mike Fink, and Sam Patch and their shared characteristics with Hawthorne’s “Americanized” classical Heroes, Perseus, Hercules, and Bellerophon.

With this “Americanizing” of his characters, Hawthorne tapped into a cultural trend in nineteenth-century America. As Regina Bendix noted in *In Search for Authenticity* “efforts to formulate a distinctively individualistic American legacy free from European inspirations” were on the rise during the nineteenth century (1997:69). Jessica Allen Hanssen also recognized Hawthorne’s participation in this trend when she insists he wrote with “one foot planted in the traditions of Europe while keeping the other foot firmly planted on fresh and fertile American soil” (2016:131). Hanssen emphasizes the negotiation between European and American traditions in Hawthorne’s depiction of the American landscape during the frame story, so further analysis has been devoted to the characters and setting of *Wonder Book’s* frame. In addition to nationalist pressures, Bendix also cites a drive for individuality deriving from Transcendentalists, such as Emerson and Thoreau, as central to this developing American identity. Giles Gunn connects this Transcendentalist individuality with the Adam myth in “The Myth of the American Adam” which he describes as “an attempt to recover for mankind with god’s gracious assistance, something of the integrity of man’s primordial innocence, of his original purity and simplicity of being” (*The Handbook of American Folklore* 1982:80). In David Marcell’s article
from the same volume, this innocence also became an integral quality of American identity with the belief in the individual’s innate connection to nature and the conviction that destiny lies within the grasp of the individual: a cornerstone in the “rags to riches” theme. Gunn also highlights parallels between the myth of creation in the Garden of Eden and the utopian efforts to create a new world by the colonizers of New England, and recognizes that implicit in this goal is the rejection of the past for a new beginning. Hawthorne, along with many historians, perceived this rejection of the past within the Adamic myth and responded with pessimism, as “optimism about the future must be tempered” with recognition of the past and human capability (1983:81). This reaction sheds light on Hawthorne’s first obsession in writing children’s novels which originally focused on the biographies of key historical figures like George Washington, battles of the Revolutionary War, and accounts of founding the colonies. This interest eventually led to the conception of Wonder Book as a connection to an ancient history. This also may explain his selection of “Pandora’s Box” or “The Paradise of Children” as a substitute for the Adam myth.

The second chapter emphasizes the effect that Hawthorne’s shift in genre has on how the narratives utilize relevant folklore scholarship as a model for the study of folklore and literature. This shift in genre is entangled in Hawthorne’s adaption of the narrative to his own Romantic and Gothic style. Daniel Hoffman delineates themes of the Romantic movement and characteristics of Gothic style elucidating their heavy reliance on folk tradition (1953:427-428). Hawthorne refashions six classical myths to fit his own Gothic
style—a process he describes as “Gothicizing.” In Hawthorne as Mythmaker, literary scholar Hugo McPherson describes Hawthorne’s Gothic style as one which “humanizes” the classical form by “infusing it with feeling or emotional color.” He emphasizes the “romantic aspect” of this style as the Gothic melds the “mysterious, even supernatural” with “tender sentiments of nostalgia, affection, and pity” (1969:44-46). This description of the Gothic centers on a contrast with the supposedly dehumanized classical style of Hawthorne’s textual sources which McPherson recognizes as a generic shift through the description “Grecian fable” rather than classical myth. This terminological difference hints at a shift in genre that occurred as Hawthorne adapted classical to fit a style and content suitable for children’s consumption. This romantic genre also fed into the nineteenth century’s “Cult of the Child” mentality. In this way, these myths turned fables are inseparably tied with the developing genre of children’s literature and evolving concepts of childhood.

The nineteenth century has been called both the period of the “cult of the child” and the “golden age of childhood,” which hints at a cultural obsession which, when combined with the sentimentality of the Romantic movement, sensationalized a particular stage of human development. Hawthorne’s preoccupation with children’s literature in his creation of his Wonder Book for Girls and Boys is an example of this age of sentimentality in action. Eighteenth-century children’s literature was tied to Calvinist doctrine which recognized original sin and its corollary, infantile depravity. This depravity was to be countered by strict rules for children and enforced by the style of literature with
“little space or desire for delight,” according to Karen Sanchez-Eppler (2004:144-45). This literature sought to teach by example through constructing a world where pious children met good outcomes and wicked children were punished. Hawthorne distanced himself from the didactic rut into which nineteenth-century children’s literature had fallen through innovative stylistic depictions of his child subjects. Hawthorne had a unique capability to connect to his young audience by “seamlessly uniting…the idealization of childhood and the expectations of culture” (2004:157).

The perceptions of childhood also have gendered ideals. In “The Golden Touch” there exists a kind of “little Eva” stereotype with King Midas’s daughter Marygold. “Little Eva” refers to the epitome of angelic children found in Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Like the fairy children in Hawthorne’s frame story, Marygold is associated by her name and physical description to the natural, innocent, and good. Despite this nuance, however, Marygold still serves as an idealized example of the passive, innocent, obedient girl-child. Hawthorne gives Marygold a foil in the mischievous Primrose who torments and teases the narrator. Primrose remains unmoved by the story of “The Golden Touch.” This failure may indicate that Hawthorne views the practice of the ideal child used as moral example as an ineffective method of effecting moral change in his reader. In fact, Eustace’s retelling earns him heaps of criticism from Primrose, “The story of King Midas…was a famous one, thousands of years before Mr. Eustace Bright came into the world, and will continue to be so long after he quits it. But some people have what we may call ‘The Leaden Touch,’ and make everything dull and heavy
that they lay their fingers upon!” ([1851] 1996:1210). However, Hawthorne does not give up on the idea that children can be moved to accept goodness through literature, as he does make a convert of Primrose when she listens to “The Chimera,” the story of how Bellerophon tamed Pegasus. His capstone narrative, “The Chimera” achieves Hawthorne’s goal of engaging with readers on an emotional and imaginative level.

Hawthorne’s shift in genre changes the function of these tales in removing semblances of the gods and goddesses (much too pagan for the moral child of the nineteenth century) and replacing them with invisible helpers and fairies. These decisions not only change the content and style but also result in a shift in genre from myth to something more like the European Märchen. This similarity coincides with the trend of importing culture and literature from Europe in the early nineteenth century. The time-out-of-mind quality associated with much of narrative folklore could give America, as a new nation, the same sense of antiquity seen both in folktales and in literary-tales of the early nineteenth century such as Washington Irving’s “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow.” A sense of antiquity could give a sense of rootedness and security to a new nation in the processes of identity formation. The translation of these tales into children’s literature in this period of early nineteenth-century American history attempts to solidify both this feeling of antiquity and the embedded morals with the generations of future Americans.

The third chapter expounds upon these embedded moral qualities as they present in Hawthorne’s frame story, which somewhat artificially mimics a
performative storytelling context. In 1972, Roger Abrahams demonstrated the performative aspects of literature. He defined performance as “demonstration of culture” and connected characteristics of folklore to similar processes in the creation of literature (1972:75). Abrahams asserts that both folklore and literature are most apparent during times of transition, a qualifier which fits a period of identity formation such as the nineteenth century America (1972:76-77). To be successful each must communicate with an audience and excite participation, and in Wonder Book this kind of reaction is intentionally cultivated as it marks the transformation of Primrose, one of the flower children, from the contented mischief-maker to the aspirational idealist. Hawthorne’s financial success with Wonder Book also led to an increase in the publication of these retold stories for children. The performative aspects are emphasized by the storyteller—child-audience paradigm set up in the frame story into which Hawthorne enters both figuratively through the narrator and literally with a cameo appearance. His narrator, Eustace Bright, makes constant interruptions to the telling of the story to relate the tale back to his allegorical child audience, thereby metaphorically addressing his actual one, the readers.

Hawthorne’s readers are not denied the moral transformation motif in children’s literature described earlier in context with “The Golden Touch.” Instead of exploiting the exhausted foil of the naughty child and exemplar child, he approaches this end with an alternative method. For Hawthorne, the idealized paradigm of the sentimentality attached to the cultural perception of childhood reflects a genuine quality in children who are receptive to “whatever is deep or
high in imagination or feeling" ([1851] 1996:1163). His adaptation of the moral transformation relies on inspiration of this innate quality of children mirrored in Primrose’s reaction to Eustace’s telling of the taming of Pegasus. His Romantic and Gothic style evoke these emotive qualities with descriptive language conjoining natural imagery with emotion such as in the short etiological tale contained in “The Chimera,” “My grandmother has told me that this clear fountain was once a beautiful woman; and when her son was killed by the arrows of the huntress Diana, she melted all away into tears. And so the water, which you find so cool and sweet, is the sorrow of that poor mother’s heart! ([1851] 1996:1280). The maiden telling this story initiates Bellerophon’s quest as the fountain that she describes is the very place he will attempt to tame the wild Pegasus, and it is through her tears at the taming of the majestic wild beast that Hawthorne drives the mischievous Primrose to her own transformative experience, “in her eyes, there were positively tears; for she was conscious of something in the legend, which the rest of them were not yet old enough to feel” ([1851] 1996:1300).

A comprehensive analysis of Hawthorne’s *Wonder Book* requires the consideration not just of Hawthorne’s preoccupations and style but also the larger cultural conception of childhood in the nineteenth century. Philosophers such as Rousseau and Emmerson and poets such Blake and Wordsworth emphasized the positive aspects they perceived in childhood: innocence and freedom, creativity and imagination, emotion and perception, and spontaneity and malleability. The last may be the most important because the ability for all the real, imperfect children to adapt and improve is implicit in the goal of
children’s literature to shape, instruct, and inspire. Literary studies such as Nicola Bown’s article in *Fairies in Nineteenth-Century Art and Literature* points out a resurgence of the fairy departure theme revived in answer to the desire for “escape from unbearable aspects of the present into a magical past” (2001:163). Bown notes that the belief in fairies attaches to specific, often rural communities and that the stable locality contrasts with the growing urban metropolitan society “marked by anonymity, dislocation and alienation” (2001:166). This nostalgic remembrance is thus a kind of compensation for the loss of tight-knit community relations. There existed similar reaction in the themes picked up on in nineteenth-century children’s literature which often privileged the rural as good and moral rootedness of family life in the country over the potential for corruption in urban life. Kenneth Grahame’s *The Golden Age* (1895) connects this disappearance of the fairy folk to the Olympians who have also faded into antiquity. “The enchanted world of the fairies is a metonym of the one where the Olympian gods walked the earth and animated the heavens” (Bown 2001:175). Hawthorne perpetuates this connection between fairies and the Olympians in *Wonder Book* with his near-elimination of the pagan for young readers, Hawthorne strips the Greco-Roman gods of their pagan identities. Even when pagan gods are present they are generally seen as re-named or unnamed helpers, like Mercury’s transformation into “Quicksilver” and the anonymity of Zeus and Athena. In these changes, Hawthorne avoids confronting his childlike audience with the evils of the adult world fitting them perfectly for “mid-nineteenth-century adult notions of
what literature should be for children: entertaining, but also morally edifying” (Bingham 1988:280-1).
Chapter One: Mythmaking in Nineteenth Century America

“The author has long been of opinion that many of the classical myths were capable of being rendered into very capital reading for children…so long as man exists, they can never perish; but, by their indestructibility itself, they are legitimate subjects for every age to clothe with its own garniture of manners and sentiment, and to imbue with its own morality. In the present version, they may have lost much of their classical aspect…and have perhaps assumed a Gothic or romantic guise.”


The nineteenth century was a period of identity formation for America, coinciding with the fervor of romantic nationalism in Europe where intellectuals such as Johann Göttfried Herder who sought “to regain poetic and cultural authenticity” (Bendix 1997:69-70). Regina Bendix notes that Americans, through literary discourse and the Transcendentalist movement, struggled “to formulate a distinctively individualistic American legacy free from European inspirations” (1997:68-69). It proved difficult, however, to divorce artistic endeavors from European models; rather, these European systems were often adapted to what Bendix calls “the New World context” (1997:69). In “The Study of Folklore in Literature and Culture,” Alan Dundes argues that this phenomenon of cultural borrowing is common in colonized societies where the “dominated culture” imagines “taking over the dominating culture’s artifacts without the presence of members of that culture” (1965:141). Dundes addresses his analysis toward the impact of European imperialism in India, but one may also discern the situation definitely in post-revolutionary America. This practice of borrowing is intrinsic to
arguably the first success of American literature, Washington Irving’s “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow.” Literary scholar Daniel Hoffman values Irving’s contributions to the literary mode though the introduction of the Romantic and Gothic into American writing, but further identifies him as the “the first American author to put to literary use the comic mythology and popular tradition of American character” (1953:425). Hoffman recognizes Irving’s use of two dominant types in contemporary folk tradition in “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow”: Ichabod Crane is the shrewd yet naive Yankee, and Brom as the rugged backwoodsman. Phillip Young extends this recognition of traditional elements to the demonstration of arrested development (represented by his decades long slumber) in Irving’s “Rip Van Winkle” where Rip epitomizes the “dangerously innocent” American male (1960:570).

This kind of cultural borrowing was not unique to the literary sphere. A scholar of American literature and material culture, Bill Brown conceptualizes the sculpture America [Figure 1] by Hiram Powers as an allegory of its namesake despite its aesthetic debt to the neoclassical movement, an opinion shared by Nathaniel Hawthorne who in his journal regards the sculpture as “embodying the ideas of youth, freedom, progress, and whatever we consider as distinctive in our country’s character and destiny” (1980:436). Brown emphasizes Powers’ allegorical mode with
attention to the thirteen-point diadem for the thirteen colonies, left foot firmly planted over a broken manacle, and left arm raised toward heaven, all items meant to touch symbolically on themes of American concern. Powers’ statue is both structurally grounded on “the traditional (Roman) fasces” and stylistically grounded in Italian medium and landscape. The strong Italian influence comes as no surprise since Powers was an expatriate living in a community of sculptors in Italy from 1837 until his death in 1873 (2013:774).

Despite Hawthorne’s praise of America, his opinion of this genre of sculpture is far from positive. His final romance The Marble Faun unfolds in an expatriate artistic community in Italy and comments directly on these artists’ ability to produce American artwork—the protagonist describes these sculptors as “the greatest plagiarists in the world” with “no…right to claim any place among the living arts” (1968:124). How, then, does Hawthorne’s adaptation of Greco-Roman myths escape from the “cold allegoric sisterhood” Hawthorne criticized in his own notebooks, later published as The French and Italian Notebooks ([1864] 1980:436)? The way in which Hawthorne incorporates the classical in Wonder Book is structurally different from Powers’. Powers took American symbols and presented them in an Italian material and style whereas Hawthorne clothes his classical material in American “manner and sentiment” (Hawthorne [1851] 1996:1163). The success and longevity of these works of early American literary and visual art are tied up in each creator’s incorporation of contemporary cultural myths. In his preface to A Wonder Book for Girls and Boys, Hawthorne indicates that his adaptation of Greco-Roman mythology is consciously imbued with the
manners, sentiment, and morality of his age. As a social commentator, satirist, and moralist, Hawthorne’s own attitudes do not necessarily harmonize with each of the cultural myths examined here, but his engagement with them invariably shapes the form and content of *Wonder Book*. In this way, Hawthorne’s *Wonder Book* is a literary endeavor that both incorporates folklore through adaptation of Greek myths, and is also shaped by folklore through his engagement with contemporary cultural tropes and stock heroes.

Alan Dundes criticizes the indiscriminate use of the term “myth” which the non-folklorist often misconstrues “as a synonym for ‘error’ or ‘fallacy’” or systems of belief. Dundes prefers to sever myth from this application of the term altogether by supplying an alternative: “folk ideas,” by which he means the “traditional notions that a group of people have about the nature of man, of the world, and of man’s life in the world” (1971:93-95). This designation is non-generic, or existing outside generic constraints, because folk ideas are a part of a culture’s implicit value system, “the building blocks of worldview” (1971:96). Dundes argues that to understand these value systems, folklorists must move past constrictive genre-specific categories to perceive the larger patterns present in a culture; hence the incorporation of multiple levels in this analysis from folk humor and folk heroes to literature and artistic expression. Though “folk idea” has failed to attain widespread contemporary use, Dundes’ exploration of this misuse of the myth does draw attention to the varied applications of the term. With the Myth-Symbol school of American Studies, Henry Nash Smith and Leo Marx pioneered an approach to humanistic studies that focuses on the “symbolic
landscape” that informs art and literature (Kuklick 1972). Smith’s The Virgin Land makes no categorical difference between myth and symbol; the two are simply larger or smaller units of “an intellectual construction that fuses concept and emotion into an image” (1972:71). These units comprise a kind of culture-specific repertoire which Marx refers to as “America’s collective imagination” and which he believed could explain American behavioral patterns (in Kuklick 1972:72). In 1972, American historian Bruce Kuklick criticizes this school of thought for its superficial understanding of cultural forms and failure to incorporate an anthropological approach to culture. A folklorist’s perspective is ideally positioned to fill the cultural gaps in the myth-symbol school. Richard Dorson identifies cultural myths as the “utopian visions of a wondrous life…glorifying larger-than-life heroes” (1983:57). Cultural myths are substantially different from myths or mythology as a form of sacred, oral narrative. These “visions” exhibit the values and ideals of the respective culture, can be observed at all levels of culture in writing and rhetoric, and pressure conformity within the culture. This is not to say that there is no variance or difference across these levels, but an understanding of these value systems can be gleaned from these expressions in both folklore and literature. Both the myth-symbol approach and Dorson’s version of cultural myth use language to emphasize the visual aspect with images and visions. Kucklick suggests that this visual aspect seeps into literature’s proclivity toward the creation of “auditory images” (1972:58). Hawthorne is ideally poised for this kind of visualizing—Edgar Allan Poe praised Hawthorne’s mastery of this
“envisioned” literary technique in his journals encouraging him to get his bottle of “visible ink, come out from the Old Manse” (1842:124).

In The Machine in the Garden, Leo Marx examines the literary fixation on the image of the Edenic garden in the nineteenth century with an emphasis on the literary theme of intrusion of technology on otherwise sentimental, pastoral scenes. For example, in the Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, runaways Huck and Jim live outside the social restrictions of the system of slavery during their isolation rafting on the Mississippi River. For them, the raft becomes a garden of innocence, but the journey is interrupted when a steamboat crashes into the raft, destroying it and (temporarily) separating the pair. Marx argues that many literary appropriations of the Edenic image reveal contradicting symbols in American culture which was both enamored with and apprehensive towards the technological and industrial innovations in the nineteenth century.

While printed sources such as works of literature or newspapers are not usually the preferred primary subject of folklorists, Frank de Caro delineates some contexts in which printed sources are useful in studying folklore. “It is obvious that if folklorists are to study cultural myths or folk ideas, they must consider printed sources” (1983:413). Furthermore, de Caro points toward Francis Lee Utley’s statement, “We may even generalize to the extent of saying that we know no...American folklore before the end of the nineteenth century,” to demonstrate the lack of systemic collection of folklore in America pre-twentieth century (1983:412-13). Even when traditions were being documented, it was most often the lore of the exotic or the other, especially Native or African
American groups, not the lore of the dominant culture. Thus, the utilization of printed sources is essential for the study of folklore in America pre-twentieth century. While printed sources may reference anything from newspapers and postcards to commercial catalogues and local histories, the study of folklore alongside American literature often encompasses “the role folklore has played in the creation and interpretation of literature” (Stahl 1983:422-23). The two disciplines have many shared interests and characteristics such as genre, composition, style, archetypes and motifs, mythic patterns, and narrative strategy. Stahl, however, recognizes a gap in the interdisciplinary study of these materials at the intersection of literature and applied folklore (1983:429). Stahl continues to emphasize the potential for children’s literature as one of these intersections. “The authors of children’s books who adapt folklore materials to their own use may be seen as consciously ‘applying’ folklore to a literary framework” (430).

**Moving up in the world: Rags to Riches and the Yankee Jonathan**

The *Handbook of American Folklore* outlines a core group of mythic categories as “Rags to Riches,” “Fables of Innocence,” and “The American Adam.” This chapter will focus on their interplay in the *Wonder Book*. The “Rags to Riches” myth has roots in the ancient and Biblical (eg. Joseph and the coat of many colors), but it became part of the quintessential American identity. Daniel Hoffman asserts that the rags-to-riches hero forms one of “the earliest and most influential examples of the new American character” (1994:34). According to Robert Walker, a professor of American civilization, it encompasses the stories of
immigrants who sought to escape the sub-standard conditions in their European home countries for better opportunities in America. For the religious, it referenced the riches awaiting in heaven, and for the Transcendentalists the achievement of harmony between the individual and nature (1983:69-70). Recalling Dorson’s descriptions, these cultural myths attract narratives “glorifying larger-than-life heroes” (1983:57). The central player of these stories is a confident youth with initiative and imagination, honest but poor, often with dependents (widowed mother, siblings, etc), living in a rural or foreign setting. Walker describes the nineteenth-century narrative sequence as follows: the young hero leaves home on the quest out of necessity and a desire for success but becomes the butt of the joke for many of the doubting locals he leaves behind. He enters a large city where, in his innocence, he is swindled by a con artist; after locating gainful employment from an honest individual, the young hero devotes himself to altruism, religious service, and self-improvement, and he solidifies his rise to success through creative innovation which significantly increases productivity in his working environment. The hero then may return home triumphant where his generosity reaches even the scoffers who mocked him at the outset (1983:67-69). Accounts like The Autobiography of Ben Franklin offer a historical perspective of this theme’s influence on formulation of a memoir in the shared faith in the ability to rise to success through hard work and innovation, a shift from Cinderella’s rise to riches earned mostly through quality of character. American rags-to-riches heroes must possess adaptability, individualism, and self-reliance if they are to succeed.
One of the most recognizable of these heroes is what Dorson refers to as “Yankee Jonathan” (1973:108). Dorson traces the history of the Yankee Jonathan with roots setting in the years after the American Revolution, rising to his true potency in the 1830s-1840s, “as a comic character in yarns” (1973:121;108). First appearing in plays and songs, this national stereotype is characterized by his country manners and classic shrewdness, such as that of Ichabod Crane. His sly dealings gave birth to the phrase “to play a Yankee trick” where the hero uses his famed ingenuity to triumph in a one-on-one transaction (Rourke 1931:6). In his analysis of these Yankee plays, Dorson notes the near inability of the Yankee Jonathan portrayed to converse outside of “humorous dialogue,” as well as his tendency toward “loose, rambling, seemingly spontaneous delivery of the backwoods storyteller” (1973:117). This description may not call to mind a brave hero, but in addition to these buffoonish characteristics the Yankee hero also possesses “moral strength and physical bravery” which along with his heart of gold elevates him to folk hero status.

Constance Rourke traces the history of the Yankee back to Yorkshire, England; in her view, early American folk and literary tradition circulating in the 1850s the Yankee has roots in Europe (1931:8-12). Collections of these Yankee Tales such as Yankee Notions: Whittlings of Jonathan’s Jacknife (1854) were replete with folk humor and Yankee narratives such as the “Yankee Trick.” For example, a shrewd Connecticut broom peddler finds himself down on his luck unable to unload any of his merchandise. Upon meeting with a merchant who—for some reason—is in desperate need of these brooms. The Connecticut broom peddler
strikes a bargain with the merchant in which he receives cash for the first half of his brooms and barters for the rest by his choice from the merchant’s stock. With the cash in hand, he deliberates on his choice of the merchant’s stock:

Now I don't know about your goods, barrin' one article, and ef I take anything else, I may be cheated. So, seein' as 'twon't make any odds with you, I guess I'll take brooms. I know them like a book, and can swear to jest what you paid for 'em." And so saying, the pedlar commenced re-loading his brooms, and, having snuggly deposited half of his former load, jumped on his cart with a regular Connecticut grin, and leaving the merchant cursing his impudence, and his own stupidity, drove off in search of another customer. (1854:276)

Hawthorne echoes this kind of Yankee humor in his retelling of Hercules’s eleventh labor retrieving the Apples of Hesperides.

Hercules enters the story by explaining his history in a series of comic, humble brags addressing the beautiful nympha whom he charms into getting guidance for his quest. His storytelling aptitude is only the first characteristic which links him to this Yankee character type. When Hercules reaches the giant Atlas, he uses his heroic strength to hold the sky while the giant retrieved the apples for him; however, when he returns, the giant refuses to take back the sky after his taste of freedom. Hercules utilizes a distinctive Yankee trick to return the sky to the giant Atlas, “Just take the sky upon your head, one instant…I want to make a cushion of my lion’s skin, for the weigh to rest upon. It really chafes me, and will cause unnecessary inconvenience in so many centuries as I am to stand
here!” ([1851] 1996:1252). Agreeing that this is only fair, Atlas takes the sky back, and Hercules is free to retrieve the apples and complete his quest. Hawthorne’s addition of these comic dialogues is reminiscent of the “Yankee Jonathan” plays and stories, and his adaptation of the narrative hinges on his reimagining of Hercules as this stock character.

Hawthorne exhibits engagement with this typified narrative preceding Wonder Book in writing “My Kinsman, Major Molineux,” first published in The Token and Atlantic Souvenir in 1832. The protagonist Robin’s experience is not confined to the typified narrative, but his entry into the city of Boston echo the familiar Yankee youth entering a large city to seek his fortune. Unlike many of the rags to riches heroes, Robin enters the city with a plan to appeal to his kinsman for an occupation, a marked difference from the self-reliant youth. However, he does resemble the rags-to-riches hero in his naiveté when he misconstrues tongue-in-cheek jeering for recognition of status or when he fails to recognize his “pretty mistress” as a prostitute ([1832] 1996:74-75). After spending a dizzying evening in an unfamiliar and unfriendly city, Robin meets his kinsman who has been tarred and feathered in a grotesque parade. Without the assistance from his kinsman, Robin considers a return journey before he is stopped by an unnamed gentleman who encourages Robin to stay, “If you prefer to remain with us, perhaps, as you are a shrewd youth, you may rise in the world, without the help of your kinsman, Major Molineux” ([1832] 1996:87: italics not in original). Daniel Hoffman points to Robin’s dependence “upon benevolent, paternalistic authority” as the root of his failure (1994:114). “My Kinsman, Major Molineux”
demonstrates Hawthorne’s awareness of this cultural myth without his being confined to it.

Although “The Miraculous Pitcher,” Hawthorne’s retelling of the story of Baucis and Philemon, may seem like a more literal “Rags to Riches” story, their rise from poverty to prosperity does not follow the narrative structure outlined above. However, his retelling of Perseus’s quest in “The Gorgon’s Head” follows this pattern quite closely. Hawthorne omits the circumstances of Perseus’s conception by Zeus’s visitation of the princess Danae. This omission is partially the result of a shift in content to make the story more appropriate for a young audience. It also removes the explanation of his abilities as part of his semi-divine status releasing him from the indebtedness to this for his success recalling the failure from “My Kinsman, Major Molineux” due to Robin’s reliance on his patron kinsman. Like the “rags to riches” hero, Perseus has a dependent (but not quite widowed) mother whose security rests on his achievement of his quest. To use Vladimir Propp’s term, his absention is precipitated by the devious King Polydectes who implies that without the success of his quest his mother will be destitute. Polydectes is the conman of Hawthorne’s narrative with this ruse meant to rid Polydectes of Perseus as an obstacle for the seduction of the mother, and Perseus’s belief in this ruse marks him as yet another naïve country youth. His departure for the quest is marked by the ridicule of the villagers, “Medusa’s snakes will sting him soundly!” ([1851] 1996:1171). Also like the “rags to riches” hero, Perseus encounters a benefactor who facilitates his rise to the occasion in Quicksilver, the renamed Mercury of the Greek myth. Perseus takes
his interactions with his quick-witted friend as an opportunity for self-improvement as he “listened the more eagerly, in the hope of brightening his own wits by what he heard” (1175). Perseus adheres to the guidance of his new friend and is rewarded by the acquisition of the materials required for the accomplishment of his adventure: the winged sandals, helmet of invisibility, and magical purse. Upon achieving his goal, Quicksilver absents himself, and Perseus returns to the court of Polydectes where he cleverly displays the proof of his success, Medusa’s severed head, which freezes the king and all those who wished for his death instantly to stone. It may seem a harsh punishment from so positive and optimistic a hero, but the narrator excuses it as “the rest of the people, as well as King Polydectes himself, were remarkably ill-behaved, and deserved no better” (1187). As a story for children, “The Gorgon’s Head” suggests that it is through obedience to Quicksilver’s guidance the childish hero succeeds in securing safety for his dependent mother along with many magical prizes.

Whereas Perseus goes out to seek his fortune, Baucis and Philemon gain their fortune from the convenience of their doorstep. Hugo McPherson interprets Hawthorne’s adaptations from his source text, Charles Anthon’s *Classical Dictionary*, and concludes that this tale keeps to Anthon’s narrative structure. Hawthorne’s presentation of the narrative through “foreshadowing and ambiguous suggestion” changes the temperament of the tale to a mystery (1971:68-69). Far from the conventional youthful hero, this couple encounters adventure in their old age after a simple life sustained by the cultivation of their garden, “their food was seldom anything but bread, milk, and vegetables, with
sometimes a portion of honey from their beehive, and...a bunch of grapes, that had ripened against the cottage wall" (1194:1259-1260). Though they held few material possessions, the description of their modest lifestyle of living from the land seems like the realization of Walker's aforementioned interpretation of the Transcendentalist variation of the “rags to riches” ideal of harmony between the individual and nature. This is the same simple fare that the couple offers the disguised Zeus and Quicksilver. Their generosity as hosts in spite of their poverty earns them their reward, a never-ending supply of food and milk and a comfortable retirement offering hospitality to travelers; conversely, the unhospitable village that drove out the travelers were punished by the transformation of the village into a lake and its inhabitants into fishes: “Since the inhabitants of yonder village have forgotten the affections and sympathies of their nature, it were better that the lake should be rippling over their dwellings!” ([1851] 1996:1273).

**American Innocence in the New Eden**

Outlined in David Marcell’s “Fables of Innocence,” the myth of American innocence permeates many of the tales in Wonder Book. This cultural myth is not typified in a specific narrative structure; rather, it is a quality that seems to pervade across American literary genres and folk ideas. In his study of American myth, R. W. B. Lewis personifies the quality with “a figure of heroic innocence and vast potentialities, poised at the start of a new history” (1955:1). Marcell links this quality to the often naïve and simplistic normative expectation which joins time and fate to human will. In this paradigm, the past does not so much bind the
individual as it recognizes that one’s future can be shaped through discipline, will, and virtue (1983:73-75).

As a result of this view, the myths, fables, and gestures through which cultures convey their most fundamental messages in America have assumed a particular cast: they suggest...the possibility of renewal and rebirth, of escape from the past and venturing onward to new beginnings...Consequently, this innocence at once furnishes justification for strenuous personal effort and a familiar, culturally-stylized rationale for any triumph over adversity. (Marcell 1979:325-26)

Furthermore, he recognizes the literary discourse surrounding this cultural myth looking to Thoreau’s *Walden Pond* experience as an experiment in human self-sufficiency with the “grand objective” being the redemption of man out of an increasingly materialistic mentality (75).

This fixation on innocence is also tied to the “Myth of the American Adam” described by Giles Gunn as an “attempt to recover for mankind, with God’s gracious assistance, something of the integrity of man’s primordial innocence, of his original purity and simplicity of being” (1983:80). The nineteenth-century Adam is a figure of possibilities, simplicity, aspiration, and boundless optimism; he is self-propelled and self-reliant to survive in an unforgiving world. Gunn describes parallels between the emergence of this cultural myth and the experiences of the first colonists in America. These early Americans saw themselves as creating order out of a chaotic, formless world, much as in the
creation story in Genesis. As a new history in a new Eden without the fall, America presented a “divinely granted second chance for the human race” (1983:80). This identification with the image of Adam, Gunn argues, continues to take hold in works like Walt Whitman’s “Song of Myself” in which Gunn argues:

the poet sets out to take possession of the world as though he were its sole artificer, Man and God in one, installing himself at its center, delegating to himself the right to name its components and define its possibilities, and proceeding at the end to pass judgement on the merits of his creation. (1983: 80-81)

This “Adamic ambition” was not viewed as inherently positive by all of Whitman’s contemporaries. Many like Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville believed that optimism about the future “must be tempered with a realistic assessment of human capabilities and the nature of life itself” (81). This concern suffuses the writings of these authors. For example, “My Kinsman, Major Molineux” highlights the ineffectiveness of the Adamic moral innocence through Robin’s vulnerability to influence when he not only partakes in the merrymaking at the expense of his kinsman’s sufferings but also overpowers the din of the entire assembly: Robin “sent forth a shout of laughter that echoed through the street; every man shook his sides, every man empties his lungs, but Robin’s shout was the loudest there” ([1862] 1996:86). Hawthorne’s backward projection of this theme into revolutionary times suggests the need for awareness of this history of human experience to avoid the same brand of spiritual vulnerability. Gunn names this distancing from the American Adam myth as the “Anti-Adam.” These tales often
begin with the same isolated hero who, rather than thriving in an unfriendly world, depicts this Adam as a failure due to his experience and moral character. The focus turns from attention paid to the hero to a homing in on the journey and the world the in which the hero acts.

Perhaps this fixation on the need for an understanding of human history is what motivated Hawthorne to create his stories for children. His first juvenile fictions were not, in fact, retellings of Greco-Roman stories. Instead, his first books intended for juvenile audiences, *Grandfather’s Chair, Biographical Stories for Children, True Stories from History and Biography, Famous Old People, and Liberty Tree*, focused on education through conveying facts about American history encompassing important events and people from three main periods: late colonial, revolutionary, and Puritan. *Wonder Book* continues in a similar vein by presenting children with an ancient history more suitable for emotional involvement of behalf of the audience, as children are, in his words, extraordinarily receptive to “whatever is deep or high in imagination or feeling” ([1851] 1996:1163). Hawthorne’s reshaping of “Pandora’s Box was the first of the collection he conceptualized. In an 1838 letter to Longfellow, Hawthorne scribbles the idea “Pandora’s box for a child’s story” (in Bingham 1988:278). Although the source represents one of the briefest episodes in classical mythology, Hawthorne’s adaptation of Pandora’s Box is perhaps the most embellished of his tales, as hinted by its new title “The Paradise of Children.” Hawthorne constructs a new Eden, a true blank slate populated entirely by motherless and fatherless children, the epitome of innocence and vulnerability,
as well as an exaggeration of this view of America as a new Eden: “There was no danger, nor trouble of any kind, no clothes to be mended, and there was always plenty to eat and drink. Whenever a child wanted his dinner, he found it growing on a tree…it was a pleasant life indeed” ([1851] 1996:1215).

Because of her innocent existence, Pandora is easily persuaded by the voices from within urging her to open the box with promises of friendship upon their release. In contrast to Adam’s claim of innocence after consuming the forbidden fruit, Hawthorne places equal blame on Pandora’s companion Epimetheus restrains himself when he has an opportunity to stop the opening of the box, meaning to take half for himself of whatever valuables lay inside (1224). Of course, the inside of the box holds nothing of material value. Lifting the lid releases the swarm of earthly troubles into the world: “the evil Passions, species of Cares, hundreds of Sorrows, Diseases, and Naughtiness” (1125). Once released, there is no repackaging the Troubles; it is as futile an effort as attempting to live in willful ignorance of the past and human nature. With this core lesson, Hawthorne supplants the Adamic myth of idealized innocence with his own origin myth that recognizes the need for humans to recognize the foibles of human nature. Hawthorne does not give Pandora’s story a completely bleak end; within the box lies one last entity, Hope, whose sentimental speech promises the children that her presence in the world will “make it always now…in the earth’s best and brightest aspect” (1129).

In American Humor, Constance Rourke noted Hawthorne’s indebtedness to the popular consciousness as he “turned toward a form which comedy more
than any other native impulse was shaping within the popular consciousness, that of legend, which permitted a fantastic or narrow or generalized handling of character” ([1931] 1951:151). Though these narratives do not retain their original form, Rourke insists that these tales, rooted in tradition, surpass the “strange regional fantasies” of Ethan Brand, and “in such works as The Wonder Book and Tanglewood Tales [Hawthorne] again, found the remote and legendary” ([1931] 1951:151).
Chapter 2: “Translating Myth”: The Clash of Classicism and Romance

The moment you put any warmth of heart, any passion or affection, any human or divine morality, into a classic mould, you make it quite another thing from what it was before. My own opinion is, that the Greeks, by taking possession of these legends…and putting them into shapes of indestructible beauty, indeed, but cold and heartless, have done all subsequent ages an incalculable injury.

– Nathaniel Hawthorne ([1851] 1996:1125)

Hawthorne incorporated, occasionally through subversion, predominant cultural myths circulating in America during the nineteenth century. These cultural myths help ground the reshaped narratives in the American context, but they are not the only aspect of Wonder Book which identifies it as an American piece of literature. To create distance between his adaptation and his criticism of classicism, Hawthorne adapts his approach to a literary Romantic mode which allows him to experiment, through folk narrative, sentiments about childhood common in the nineteenth century. Jessica Allen Hanssen, a professor at Nord University specializing in nineteenth-century American literature, asserts that Hawthorne succeeded in breaking out of the classical mold by keeping “one foot planted in the traditions of Europe while keeping the other foot firmly on fresh and fertile American soil” (2016:131). Hanssen specifies that Hawthorne’s use of frame narratives and meta-textual conflicts—parallel conflicts within the frame and the story being told—successfully translates Greek mythology into an American context with its own merit (2016:132). These meta-textual conflicts
begin in the first story, “The Gorgon’s Head,” where the namesake has the power to turn warmth and life into “cold and lifeless stone” ([1851] 1996:1171). This is a metaphorical representation of Hawthorne’s understanding of the “classical mould,” which he describes as “cold and heartless” ([1851] 1996:1125). The selection of this adaptation as an introduction to Eustace’s own world of story answers Hawthorne’s earlier criticism. Perseus adds Medusa’s head to his toolbelt as easily as Hawthorne incorporates his classical material to his established literary repertoire in the Romantic and American Gothic traditions. This romanticizing occurs on multiple levels. It involves a generic shift from classical myth to something more like Märchen, a regional shift from the European context to the American which leads to the incorporation of the nineteenth-century idea of childhood.

**Shifting Genres: From Myth to Märchen**

In his essay “The Forms of Folklore,” William Bascom delineates criteria of mythic categorization emphasizing their location in the remote, ahistorical past and sacred attitude. Myths describe the creative events in the beginning of time and function as models for a pattern of behavior with have been sanctioned by usage (Dundes 1984:51-52). In contrast, Märchen, what are often called fairy tales, are “fictional, dramatically told, and privately owned” (Bascom 1965:335). Like most fairy-tales, romances are dominated by the path of a single-hero protagonist who moves through a series of episodes in pursuit of a single goal, but Hawthorne’s recontextualization shifts the setting and tone of the classical myths into something localized, based on familiar landscapes. In fact, Eustace
often draws inspiration from the landscape for his tales as he waits until they reach the summit before telling his story about Bellerophon and Pegasus careening off cliff edges. The frame story transplants the European stories to the New England countryside and firesides of American homes. He demotes the gods to invisible or spritely helpers which shifts the tone away from the sacred and toward the lighthearted, playful attitude we recognize in children’s books today. In essence, the renaming of Mercury to Quicksilver or the anonymity of Athena and Zeus demythologizes the narratives. This recontextualization occurs at all levels of the story as Eustace’s “Once upon a time” introduction to the retelling of King Midas further distances the narrative from the sacred and cosmogonic to the fictional “timeless and placeless” setting of Märchen (Bascom 1965:4). Literary Märchen such as the collections of Hawthorne’s contemporary Hans Christian Andersen had yet to take hold in the New World even into the nineteenth century, as Alan Richardson notes in *Literature, Education, and Romanticism*. In America, fiction targeted at children was initially perceived as a corrupting influence, but, like many other cultural products, European obsession with Märchen trickled over (Richardson 1994:109-111). Along with John Locke’s recommendation of Aesop’s fables (1994:112), *Wonder Book* may have done much to increase popularity of these stories in America, as it aligned with the nineteenth-century obsession with the classical period while refashioning those popular materials for a market with increasing demands for juvenile literature. The Gothic mode became an apt avenue for this transformation allowing for the Romantics’ idealized view of childhood and the fairy world.
Frank de Caro and Rosan Augusta Jordan would classify Hawthorne’s endeavor as “re-situating” the ways authors incorporate, adapt, or imitate folklore in a work of literature. This terminological shift diverts potential linguistic tunnel-vision and eliminates generic limitations. In *Re-Situating Folklore*, Jordan and de Caro refocus the goals of studying folklore in literature and art, a process initiated by Alan Dundes in his 1965 article “The Study of Folklore in Literature and Culture: Identification and Interpretation.” Dundes’ article calls for folklorists studying literature to move past the “mechanics of identification” toward the more subjective interpretation of folklore in context (1965:137). Jordan and de Caro further develop this process by desiring “to go beyond identification and interpretation” to a third step, examining “how particular literary uses of folklore fit into a larger, more fundamental concept of what folklore is and how and what folklore communicates” (2015:15). The characters in *Wonder Book*’s frame-story critique the methods and merits of Eustace’s adaptations throughout the book but perhaps nowhere as overtly as Eustace’s retelling of “The Three Golden Apples.”

**Mr. Pringle the Classicist: From European to American**

Well into *Wonder Book*, Hawthorne introduces Mr. Pringle, a classical scholar, father to several of the children in Eustace’s child audience, and the only adult present in the frame narrative. As someone in the process of developing his own narrative authority, Eustace is reluctant to open his stories to someone beyond his intended audience, “You are not exactly the auditor that I should have chosen, Sir…for fantasies of this nature” ([1851] 1996:1235). At Mr. Pringle’s insistence, however, Eustace draws inspiration from a nearby plate of apples and
launches into his retelling of Hercules’ eleventh labor to recover the apples of Hesperides. Hercules must squeeze information out of the “Old One” (Poseidon) and outwit Atlas, who retains his original name, to achieve the goal of his quest. The young Hercules defeats both holders of ancient knowledge which, as Hanssen would no doubt suggest, can be understood as a representation of Eustace’s defense of his narratives to the classical scholar Mr. Pringle. This identification of Eustace with his invented heroes is certainly supported by Hanssen who suggests that Hercules “is a projection of Eustace’s idealized self” (2016:133). If we understand these heroes as an extension of Eustace’s persona, then drawing parallels between the old ones and Mr. Pringle is at least implied, especially when Eustace draws comparisons between the two in the end-frame stating that, while he himself is dwarfed by the giant Atlas, so is Mr. Pringle. Eustace’s targeting of Mr. Pringle in this way represents on some level Hawthorne’s own targeting of readers resembling the uptight caregiver. Though not viewed as directly hostile, readers like Mr. Pringle—who continue to endorse total fidelity to the literary or artistic materials imported from Europe—criticize or dismiss rather than encourage the new, vibrant traditions evolving on their own shores, just as Mr. Pringle does to Eustace. At the end of the tale, after many silent moments, Mr. Pringle challenges Eustace’s interpretation of the story, “Pray let me advise you never more to meddle with a classical myth. Your imagination is altogether Gothic, and will inevitably gothicise everything that you touch” ([1851] 1996:1254). This “Gothicization” is a somewhat vague term coined by Hawthorne and used only a few times throughout Wonder Book, but Eustace’s
response to this criticism begins to flesh it out: “The moment you put any warmth of heart, any passion or affection, any human or divine morality, into a classic mould, you make it quite another thing from what it was before” ([1851] 1996:1256). Instead of mimicking the classical style, Hawthorne draws from these American authors particularly with his reference to Rip Van Winkle in the introduction to the final narrative. As the children ascend Bald Summit, Eustace recognizes the range as the Catskills where “among those misty hills, he said, was a spot where some old Dutchmen were playing an everlasting game of nine-pins, and where an idle fellow, whose name was Rip Van Winkle, had fallen asleep, and slept twenty years at a stretch” ([1851] 1996:1279). Both authors argued that materials from transformed European literature can be utilized in the construction of something entirely American.

**Education and Romanticism**

Like literature from the early nineteenth century, children’s literature was often imported from Europe, and this “literature” consisted of moralistic child-rearing manuals. However, after the 1830s this practice had largely gone out of regular use as Americans sought to indoctrinate their children into American morals and patriotic sentiments. That is not to say that the literature suddenly became interesting, but that “the education of the young was a serious moral, spiritual, and political undertaking” with “little space or desire for delight” (Sanchez-Eppler 2004:144). This pattern for juvenile literature sought to teach through example, as good, pious children met good ends and evil, naughty children were punished. Some have dismissed Hawthorne’s mid-century
contemporaries for creating stores that were “for the most part thinly-cloaked parables teaching conventional moral and social standards” (Billman 1982:107). This shift in function of juvenile literature in the 1830s mirrored a concurrent changing perception of childhood. As Karen Sanchez-Eppler surmised, this half of the nineteenth century framed a movement away from more traditional Calvinist methods of education founded on the belief in original sin and “infantile depravity” to a more romantic view of childhood which fostered a process that “nurtured the good instead of subdued the bad.” (2004:145). Anne Scott MacLeod concurs with the corollary that most Americans of this period believed that “children come into the world with potential for both good and evil” (2004:94).

Anne Scott MacLeod, author of American Childhood, theorized that the emphasis placed on a pedagogical moral literature was a result of the American belief that the social stability of the new nation was dependent upon public virtue and moral character (1971:89). Because these stories had such specificity of function, seeking only to induce a sense of honor and useful sentiment in their younger audience, they often sacrificed narrative structure and characterization in the process. American literary critic and historian, Nina Baym hypothesizes that Hawthorne linked the innocence of children to a more poetic and perceptive imagination which is why Hawthorne believed them to be so receptive of this type of Gothicized story. His “Gothicization” uses this sense of emotion inherent in children to “enrich the reality” of the tales by “reaching…toward a supernatural world” (Baym 1973:41). However, unlike Poe’s Gothic, Hawthorne’s stories are
sketched for an audience whom he believed “incapable of conceiving fear or horror” (1973:42).

Nina Baym tackles the question of audience for Hawthorne’s fiction again in her essay “Hawthorne’s Myths for Children: The Author versus His Audience” where she argues that the issue of Hawthorne’s revision is inseparable from his intention to adapt them to “a conception of childish sensibility” (Baym 1973:35-37). When Hawthorne began to consider writing *The Wonder-Book for Girls and Boys*, he aimed, in his own words, to “revolutionize the whole system of juvenile literature” (Hawthorne 1989:266) This shows that upon entering this field, he realizes the genre is filled with expressly flat, didactic “thinly-veiled parables” (Billman 1982:107). He sought to break the trend of morality without structure. Because Hawthorne wrote specifically to his younger audience, he employed a series of innovative stylistic changes to improve this worn-out genre. He began to popularize the use of narrative inserting adventure and conflict where before there had for the most part been flat lessons, a risky move in Derek Pacheco’s mind for a society of “anti-fiction sentiments” (290). This risky “pedagogy of storytelling” confronted the established method of education all while stressing the uncanny ability for education through fiction.

Hawthorne chose to populate not only his stories but also his frame almost exclusively with the peers of his intended audience which supports to Nina Baym’s statement that there exists “a rare sense of harmony between Hawthorne’s own view…and the assumed view of his audience” (1937:36). Despite his mature posturing, Eustace fits in more with the children than his adult
host, an insecurity for which the mischievous Primrose ceaselessly teases him: “Hear him, Periwinkle, trying to talk like a grown man . . . Cousin Eustace, you must put off your airs” ([1851] 1996:1234). Hawthorne uses this constant teasing to emphasize Eustace’s inexperience and align him with the children in the frame story. This alignment becomes crucial to our understanding of Hawthorne’s ideal paradigm of education. He chooses to appeal to the sentimental, natural and emotional aspects of children’s nature to shape them by emotional experience, rather than to shape them by a moral pedagogy forcibly shoved down their throats. He prefers to teach through inspiration instead of force, and affection over command, because as he said himself, this literature requires “a nicer understanding of the youthful heart and intellect…than can often be at the command of any man” (Parley 1859:vii). This paradigm is alluded to in the Tanglewood parlor in a marble copy of Greenough’s Angel and Child placed in the entryway of Mr. Pringle’s parlor. The sculpture depicts one child being led to providence on the arm of an infant angel. Despite the nudity, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts—which today houses the

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1 In his text, Hawthorne names the sculpture Angel and Child, but the title given by the artist, Horatio Greenough, is The Ascension of a Child Conducted by an Infant Angel.
sculpture—indicates that the sculpture gained popularity in America because its sentimentality and “message of hope and spirituality in an age of high infant mortality.” The sentimentalizing of childhood opens the door to an overlooked cultural myth of nineteenth century America, which I call The Redeeming Child.

**The Redeeming Child**

The Redeeming Child, like the Rags-to-Riches story, follows a typified narrative pattern in which an angelic child enacts a moral transformation in a less than innocent party, usually an adult or a naughty child. Claire Perry, author of *Young America* and curator of the Smithsonian traveling exhibit *American ABC: Childhood in 19th Century America*, presents large selection of contemporary paintings, portraits, and illustrations trends in the depiction of children across racial and gender lines. One of these categories, “Daughters of Liberty,” Perry suggests is exemplified in Seymour Joseph Guy’s *Unconscious of Danger* which one contemporary critic describes as “a young lad, unconscious of danger, while dreaming of the future, walking to the edge of a high ledge of rocks, while his sister is in the act of striving to bring him back” (quoted in Perry 2006:35). Guy’s gender casting is typical of The Redeeming Child who is a usually young girl. Perry connects this casting to
women’s role in the domestic sphere where they were the “antidote for male egalitarian shenanigans” (2006:37).

Seen as morally superior, the women were moral guardians and the husbands’ salvation became the burden of women and young girls. There exist scores of literary counterparts that hinge on The Redeeming Child narrative pattern from Louisa May Alcott’s Beth to Charles Dickens’ Little Nell, but it is perhaps most widely recognized in Harriet Beecher Stowe’s characterization of little Eva in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Eva serves as an inspiration to the characters in Stowe’s novel, and the strength of her influence often steals the spotlight from the title character. Eva is the educative force who teaches Tom to read, and her interactions with her father’s slaves cast shade upon even the most positively depicted adults. Eva’s role in the narrative is to inspire the best in each of the characters with whom she interacts even those considered hopeless by everyone else, such as Topsy:

‘Oh, poor child, I love you!’ said Eva, with a sudden burst of feeling, and laying her little thin, white hand on Topsy’s shoulder; ‘I love you, because you haven’t had any father, or mother, or friends; —because you’ve been a poor, abused child! I love you, and I want you to be good. I am very unwell, Topsy, and I think I sha’n’t live a great while; and it really grieves
me to have you be so naughty. I wish you would try to be good, for my sake;—it’s only a little while I shall be with you.’ (1852:191)

Eva’s speech inspires a true turn in Topsy’s behavior as “a ray of heavenly love” penetrated her heart (Stowe 1852:191). Eva’s death is the catalyst which finally spurs her father to reject slavery; thus, in Stowe’s eyes, Eva brings her father the ultimate redemption just before his own death. This theme of the father’s redemption coincident with the destruction of the daughter may be seen as well in *Wonder Book* in “The Golden Touch” where King Midas’ fallibility is contrasted with his daughter’s innocence. Midas’s insatiable greed is one of Hawthorne’s “Gothic excesses” according to Derek Pacheco, a contributing author to *The Nathaniel Hawthorne Review* (2012:60). Midas’s acquisition of the golden touch is infectious, transmuting the natural to the unnatural.

Marygold is described as “warm and tender” with “rose-colored” cheeks ([1851] 1996:1206) and golden “glossy ringlets” ([1851] 1996:1209), the perfect picture of a cherub. Marygold’s connection to emotional sentimentality also enforces the “Eva” stereotype. Her floral name connects her further to the roses in the garden whose transmutation foreshadows Marygold’s own alchemical transformation. She is connected to her physical senses throughout the story as she delights in the fragrance of the rose garden ([1851] 1996:1202), enjoys the sight of the painted figures on her china bowl ([1851] 1996:1203), and even the tactile sensation of the kiss that turns her into an unfeeling statue connects her to physical sensation. These sensations are all connected to Marygold’s distress with their loss, “the beautiful roses that smelled so sweetly…are blighted and
spoilt...and have no longer any fragrance” ([1851] 1996:1202) and her “sweet and sorrowful impulse” to comfort her father drives her to unwittingly become frozen in her “look of love, grief, and pity” ([1851] 1996:1205). Her connection to sensations like these set her childlike innocence apart from her father’s more matured sensitivity that is only stimulated by the sight, sound, and smell of metal:

Midas used to pass whole hours in gazing at them, and inhaling their perfume. But now, if he looked at them at all, it was only to calculate how much the garden would be worth...And though he was once fond of music, the only music for poor Midas, now, was the chink of one coin against another ([1851] 1996:1195-6)

However far gone from childlike sensibility he seems at the beginning of the story, Midas is changed by the innocence of his daughter. It is ironic that through her own transformation, Marygold is able to transform the heart of her father: “It had been a favorite phrase of Midas...to say that she was worth her weight in gold...And now, at last, when it was too late, he felt how infinitely warm and tender a heart, that loved him, exceeded in value all the wealth that could be piled up betwixt the Earth and sky” ([1851] 1996:1206). This contrast and conversion of the adult and child’s sensitivity through the reception of nature and sentimentality only solidifies Marygold’s fulfilment of the “Eva” stereotype even if Marygold’s suffers only a temporary destruction.

Even though Gillian Brown, a scholar of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American culture, literature, and children’s literature, asserts that Hawthorne establishes Marygold as a moral center, she argues that Hawthorne
undermines “the enormity of expectations placed upon children” (2001:83). In his eyes Marygold fulfils a traditional nineteenth-century role of redeemer through her ability to transform the greed of her father to love by her exemplar moral qualities. But a contradiction of this stereotype forms in the juxtaposition of the rejection of Calvinist and Puritanical ideas about original sin and the acceptance of inherited sins. These contradictions can be seen in the assumption that these saintly children appear to be without fault from birth and the fact that as Marygold retains the “gold-tinged hair” ([1851] 1996:1209) from her brief time as a statue which marks her with the evidence of her father’s greed (Brown 2001:83-92). This contradiction shows that while Hawthorne is aware of gendered stereotypes, like that of the angelic Eva, he is not constrained by them. Rather, he manipulates his narrative to both represent and contradict these social stereotypes.

The loss of his daughter to the alchemic effect instigates his moral transformation and facilitates his redemption through cleansing waters: As he dipt the pitcher into the water, it gladdened his very heart to see it change from gold into the same good, honest earthen vessel which it had been, before he touched it. He was conscious, also, of a change within himself. No doubt, his heart had been gradually losing its human substance, and transmuting itself into insensible metal ([1851] 1996:1208-1209).

The language here is deliberately symbolic and allegoric used to infuse what Hawthorne calls “the Marvelous” with the “sociopolitical and economic world” for
social commentary (Hawthorne 1965: preface; Budick 1996:3). “The Golden Touch” is not the only Gothic element to enliven Hawthorne’s adaptations. His retelling “The Miraculous Pitcher” also involves a social ideal: the hospitable, unimposing couple who sacrifice their food and comfort for that of their guests. For their reward, Zeus, unnamed and in disguise, transmutes their ordinary, empty pitcher into one that will always remain full. At the end of their days, the couple achieves a kind of Romantic ideal by literally becoming one with nature when they are transformed into ancient, entwined trees. By shifting the genre of the narrative from classical myth to fairy-tale, Hawthorne translates the classical to the Romantic and imbues the narratives with affirmations of or critiques of contemporary culture with vivid Gothic symbols like Marygold’s gold tinged hair of the entwined branches of Baucis and Philemon.
Chapter 3: Between the Imaginary and the Real: Performance in the Pedagogy of Storytelling

“The floor of our familiar room has become a neutral territory, somewhere in between the real world and fairy-land, where the Actual and the Imaginary may meet, and each imbue itself with the nature of the other.”


In March 1838, over a decade before writing Wonder Book, Hawthorne sent a letter to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow hypothesizing that he might “revolutionize the whole system of juvenile literature” (1989:266). His exact intentions with this statement remain ambiguous, though many have suggested that this refers to his incorporation of classical narrative in Wonder Book. Though such incorporation was unusual during this period, the gap in time from the penning of the letter and the writing of Wonder Book suggests the potential for alternative interpretations such as the texture and subtext of the narrative performance in the frame story. Hawthorne experimented much with framed narratives during his writing career. In 1841, Hawthorne published his first volume of children’s literature Grandfather’s Chair. Biographer Barbara Wineapple recounts that the inspiration for the framed structure derived from Susanna Ingersoll, a cousin of Hawthorne, who suggested her antique oak chair for a prop in his children’s book. The chair became the anchor for his whole series of juvenile histories, and the framed structure became his default for children’s narratives with a young, blind child and his mother in the Biographical
Stories (1842), and Eustace Bright and the flower-children in Wonder Book (1851). Hawthorne’s use of frame sets up a paradigm of education through storytelling that mimics the oral performance of narrative.

In her survey of Hawthorne’s childhood, Barbara Wineapple emphasizes his childhood penchant for “‘chimney-corner’ stories” (2003:15-16). These early experiences with storytelling turned into exercises in repertoire building. The self-conscious author recognized his debt to these lessons in storytelling with the title of his first collection of short stories Twice-Told Tales (1837), an name which implies a system of repetition and variation in storytelling. His awareness of the variations in retelling narratives is stated in his 1854 collection Mosses from an Old Manse:

I manufactured a great variety of plots and skeletons of tales and kept them ready for use, leaving the filling up to the inspiration of the moment; though I cannot remember ever to have told a tale which did not vary considerably from my preconceived idea, and acquire a novelty of aspect as often as I repeated it. (1974: 416-417).

This incorporation of flexible oral storytelling process into a writing process causes Hawthorne’s materials to have a sense of orality.

Roger Abrahams notes the similar goals between performer and author in “Folklore and Literature as Performance.” He acknowledges both as expressive “demonstrations of culture” in which a group “stylizes their interactions” (1972:75). Both methods of transmission include expectations on both the
performer/author and audience/reader: the author’s goal is to inspire a synchronized reaction from the audience (1972:76). Hawthorne demonstrates his expectations for his readership with the reactions of his framed audience: resistance from those set in their ways like Mr. Pringle and engagement and delight from the youngest of Tanglewood’s children, with the possibility of moral inspiration in the older children like Primrose. Abrahams acknowledges “the larger social and cultural context” of a literary work when compared to an individual performance; however, to succeed, both must draw upon the base-metaphors of a community, like the cultural myths discussed in the first and second chapters (1972:78-79).

In “The Oral Storyteller in Hawthorne’s Novels,” Coleman W. Tharpe notes Hawthorne’s continual “artistic experiments with the oral folk tradition” through the recurring presence of vagabond storytellers and wise elders who mediate the tales to both the audience and the reader (1979:205). Hawthorne’s control of the audience in the frame allows him to develop distinct voices for his narrators whose authority is either confirmed or challenged based upon the audience’s reception of the performance. Recall Eustace’s impromptu performance for Mr. Pringle discussed in the previous chapter. Eustace tailors the content of this performance to his immediate audience with “The Golden Apples.” Just as Hawthorne derives inspiration for his tales from items in his physical surroundings, as with the case of Grandfather’s chair, Eustace notices a nearby bowl of the tempting fruit and thereby grounds the world of his story in the physical realm. Though they may share similar styles, Hawthorne’s voice is only
expressed as an extradiegetic narrator in the introduction for the foregrounding of Eustace Bright, but the interplay between Hawthorne’s experience and Eustace’s experimentations comment on the cultural work in *Wonderbook*. His distance from his young narrator is comically highlighted in the discussion after the telling of “The Chimera” when Eustace shocks Primrose about the “silent man, who lived in the old red house near Tanglewood avenue…”

‘Hush, Primrose. Hush!’ exclaimed Eustace, in a thrilling whisper, and putting his finger on his lip. ‘Not a word about that man, even on a hill-top! If our babble were to reach his ears, and happen not to please him, he has but to fling a quire or two of paper into the stove; and [we all] would turn to smoke, and go whisking up the funnel…he has a terrible power over ourselves, extending to nothing short of annihilation. ([1851] 1996:1301)

Hawthorne’s authorial intrusion by no means novel; in fact, it could be understood as yet another adaptation of European traditions with precursors like Chaucer and Shakespeare. Still, Eustace’s comical anxiety about the possibility that he or any other inhabitant of Tanglewood might offend Hawthorne dramatizes Hawthorne’s presence in the narrative as an observer rather than narrator and author further separating the author from the narrator. This is accomplished while in the same passage acknowledging Hawthorne’s power as author to destroy the manuscript without distribution and highlights tensions between the experience of oral and written stories throughout *Wonder Book*. Within the frames for the individual stories, the actions of those in the frame are
described in the third person, as if Hawthorne is a hidden observer recording instead of creating the scene at hand, furthering the sense that this is intended to be more of a storytelling experience than a literary one.

In “The Power of Narrative,” Jessica Allen Hanssen tracks Eustace’s learning curve as he practices his storytelling with the children of Tanglewood. She emphasizes his narrative innovations like the addition of Marygold as Eustace’s exercises in narrative authority, but Hanssen perhaps overidentifies Eustace with his fictive characters. A performative analysis of the framing techniques and his audience’s reception of the performance seems a more accurate measure of his storytelling skills than the preoccupation with finding parallels in the frame story with Eustace’s characters. For instance, Lee Haringcatalogues many instances of framing in oral narrative, including the frame as literary genre which “because it requires other genres to live on…is parasitic” (2004:230). Hawthorne’s extended experiments with this genre developed in him an adept hand at mimicking oral storytelling frames within his written narratives. Eustace is a storyteller who personalizes his performances with what Katherine Young calls “edgework” or the shifting back in forth between the narrative and the narrative frame—what Young calls Tale-world and Story-realm (in Haring 2004:234). Eustace specifically addresses his child audience with introductory phrases like “Now, I need hardly remind such wise little people as you” ([1851] 1996:1196) or interjects facetious morals such as Eustace’s reaction exposition about the Three Gray Women (Hawthorne’s name for the Graeae): “As a general rule, I would advise all people, whether sisters or brothers, old or young, who
chance to have but one eye amongst them, to cultivate forbearance, and not all insist upon peeping through it at once" ([1851] 1996:1881).

Eustace relies on fixed phrases like “Once upon a time” ([1851] 1996:1195), “Long, long ago” ([1851] 1996:1215), or even simply “Once” ([1851] 1996:1280) initiate his performances, and he incorporates codas, a closing formula, to transition back into the frame like at the end of “The Miraculous Pitcher” as the children hungrily awaited dinnertime at Tanglewood, “And I wish, for all our sakes, that we had the pitcher here, now!” ([1851] 1996:1275). For the listener, these codas link the world described in the story and the world in which the story is told, in a framed narrative they assist the reader in transitioning between the frame story and the framed narrative. While some stories may transition to the end of a narrative with an “and they lived happily ever after,” other transitions comment on content from the narrative to make connections to the narrative context, as is the case when the hungry children wish for a bottomless pitcher. These statements further the resemblance of Hawthorne’s storytelling to Märchen structure which is known for these narrative elements.

The Gothic Mode & Themes of Moral Transformation

Hugo McPherson, who wrote one of the first critical studies of Hawthorne’s children’s literature, suggests that the techniques of romance “bears closely upon the technique of the mythological tales” (1971:44). That Hawthorne would blend the literary style of his romances into his other writings seems a logical conclusion especially considering that he began writing Wonder Book immediately after publishing The House of Seven Gables (1851). In the
nineteenth century, *romance* was a genre independent of the *novel* identified with a particular group of authors writing in New England: specifically Edgar Allan Poe, Herman Melville, and Nathaniel Hawthorne (Budick 1996:3). In the introduction to *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne suggests a permission given by the romance to exaggerate the “atmospherical medium” and to render in the reader an affected reality “between the Imaginary and the Real” (1962:36). Darrel Abel indicates in *The Moral Picturesque* that the graphic and extraordinary in these narratives expresses through symbol and figures the vital, spiritual, and psychological understanding underlying human reality, an accusation not-infrequently applied to Märchen (1988:117-119). Within the romance, these atmospheric changes are often heralded by the inclusion of Gothic elements like prophetic warnings, supernatural entities, ruins, curses, and demonic enterprises. The use of these supernatural elements in Gothic stories is a showy and effective means to elicit a specific reaction from the reader calling into mind Flannery O’Connor’s vision of the contemporary Southern Gothic literature:

> When you can assume that your audience holds the same beliefs you do, you can relax a little and use more normal ways of talking to it; when you have to assume that it does not, then you have to make your vision apparent by shock — to the hard of hearing you shout, and for the almost blind you draw large and startling figures. (1969:34)

O’Connor’s Gothic, like Hawthorne’s, is intended to enact a moral realization in the reader.
For example, much has been made of the symbol of Faith’s pink ribbons in Hawthorne’s “Young Goodman Brown.” Most often the color of the ribbons is understood to symbolize the young wife’s innocence when viewed in the daylight of the Puritan village, but the color could be taken to hint at much more. Goodman Brown’s story challenges the social naiveté in Brown’s assumption of the goodness of his fellow villagers and his confidence in the goodness and purity of his wife. His confidence in his spouse’s purity is so great that he intends “to cling to her skirts and follow her to Heaven” ([1851] 1996:276). Brown’s trust of his neighbors and his wife is destroyed when in the forest, a liminal space between the civilization and the supernatural, he recognizes as neighbors the individuals dancing with the devil. With this knowledge, our understanding of Faith’s ribbons takes on new color. Where pink may at times symbolize femininity and the bloom of youth, the revelation of her corruption provides an alternative. Pink is a tint of a color, meaning that it is a mixture of white with a small amount of color; pink is made by the combination of white, the color of purity, and red, the color of sexual sin recognized in *The Scarlet Letter* indicating that Faith’s purity has always been in question. Therefore, one moral of the Goodman Brown’s story is that dependence on another’s goodness or purity is an unreliable path to spiritual salvation. The stories in *Wonder Book*, like “Young Goodman Brown,” focus on material symbols like the earlier-mentioned Gorgon’s Head, but the Gothic elements of the children’s tales are enhanced for the intended audience.

Hawthorne creates his own version of the moral transformation theme in his frame story. The transformation of Primrose, the oldest at the age of twelve,
illustrates the traditional “naughty child” paradigm of nineteenth century juvenile literature. Primrose’s reactions become particularly important as they show the overarching effect of the tales on the suspected audience. She begins in the first frame as a stubborn, mischievous child with a “naughty little heart” or even “a little imp” ([1851] 1996:1210, 1214). However, she does undergo a change by the end of the last tale where she cries, suggesting that “the student had contrived to breathe through [the tale] the ardor, the generous hope, and the imaginative enterprise of youth” ([1851] 1996:1300) suggesting that there is indeed something high and emotional in the stories that children are singularly capable of sensing. Lesley Ginsberg asserts that the final story, “The Chimera”, draws parallels between the winged horse Pegasus’s taming by Bellerophon and Primrose’s surrender to the power of the story (1993:264-6). Both experience the transition from “wild and solitary creatures” ([1851] 1996:1291) to a state of grateful domestication though the gateway of emotion shown in their tears (Ginsberg 1993:257-8): “[Pegasus] looked round to Bellerophon, with the tears in his beautiful eyes, instead of the fire that so recently flashed from them” and “In [Primrose’s] eyes, there were positively tears; for she was conscious of something in the legend” ([1851] 1996:1291; 1300).

This transformation shows Hawthorne’s adaptation of the cultural education of children through literature. He chooses to appeal to the sentimental, natural and emotional aspects of children’s nature to shape them by emotional experience than to shape them by a forced moral pedagogy shoved down their throats. He prefers to teach through desire instead of force and affection over
command because as he said himself, this literature requires "a nicer understanding of the youthful heart and intellect…than can often be at the command of any man" (Sanchez-Eppler 2004:149-150). His method becomes more effective for the reader who like Primrose may be naughty by action but may also be appealed to through the "high and imaginative" nature of story ([1851] 1996:1163). Ginsberg corroborates this interpretation of Primrose's transformation stating, “Primrose's teary response signals her change from an untamed little girl who risks opening the Pandora's Box…to the domesticated nineteenth-century heroine of sensibility” (1993:259).
Conclusion

Juvenile literature such as *Wonder Book for Girls and Boys* offers a unique window into contemporary concerns. Despite the specificity of cultural origin, the classical narratives adapted by Hawthorne are relocated entirely to their New World context. Derek Pacheco notes that while often literature is used as an escape from everyday life, Hawthorne “insistently register[s] his investment in contemporary circumstances (2007:285). As authors and storytellers reimagine these narratives, folklore scholars should continue to study the ways in which cultural preoccupations, established narratives, and contemporary perceptions of childhood influence the ways and reasons we tell stories to children.

Hawthorne engages with his readers by incorporating dominant cultural narratives like those discussed in the first chapter. These cultural materials help transform their European context of origin into the developing sense of identity in America. Hawthorne’s texts are rewritten into a new landscape using distinctly American literary expressions, essentially Romantic and Gothic, and heavily influenced by contemporary authors like Washington Irving. These literary styles are known for their exaggerated metaphors which connect more with the reader’s emotional sensitivity than the coldness for which Hawthorne criticized classical renditions. The heroic qualities of his protagonists are also dictated in part by the dominant cultural narratives just as the Rags-to-Riches narrative reflects contemporary values like the veneration of independence, innovation, and hard-work. An analysis of these qualities places *Wonder Book* at the nexus of identity formation in America beginning with its idealized youths.
Hawthorne’s adaption of the Romantic and Gothic style relies on a connection to the emotions of his readers which, as the second chapter explains, becomes Hawthorne’s avenue for moral transformation in his young readers whom he deems uniquely perceptive to that kind of language. Shifting genres from their original mythical contexts alters not only the content—such as the removal of the gods—but also the tone and function of the story. This “re-situating” of these stories makes room for the American experience and the experiences of those in the frame story, and the tension caused by this transition is symbolically expressed in Eustace’s defense of his revisions to Mr. Pringle. Mr. Pringle’s age renders him incapable of accepting Eustace’s imaginative retellings as anything but childish nonsense. Ironically, it is because Hawthorne tailors the narratives to the sensibilities of children, the focus of the effort, that Mr. Pringle fails to understand their importance. These revisions are not only key in reinterpreting specific narratives; they also demonstrate Hawthorne’s interpretation of the genre of juvenile literature which he believed should inspire rather than dictate. His incorporation of the Little Eva stereotype in “The Golden Touch” highlights the tensions between these two approaches as it both fulfills and critiques the expectations of the Redeeming Child paradigm. This depiction is exaggerated by adaptation of a Gothic style with Midas’s “Gothic excesses” which dramatize the gap between Midas’s worldly influence and his daughter’s natural innocence (Pacheco 2012:60). Because Hawthorne saw the Redeeming Child paradigm, with its polarization of angelic and naughty children, as an
essentially ineffective method of education, the paradigm fails to improve Primrose’s mischievous behavior.

The failure of the established paradigm is not the resolution of Primrose’s journey. She is eventually moved to a moral transformation through her emotional connection to the Pegasus symbol in “The Chimera” which Hawthorne promotes as an alternative experience for the child reader, the pedagogy of storytelling. His belief in the power of narrative as a pedagogical tool extends to his decision to represent these tales in a framed structure which focuses on the interaction between the children and their storyteller. Despite their fanciful names, the children behave much like any child audience. At times they are inquisitive and demanding, interrupting the narrator for further explanation or simply to comment, and in the case of the youngest, sometimes missing the narrator’s intended moral altogether.

Ultimately these stories have not been left untouched since Hawthorne left them 184 years ago. Hawthorne doesn’t live under the illusion that they will be, either. Eustace’s child audience was left to offer their own suggestions and revisions of their own at the end of many of the tales which even suggests an encouragement or endorsement of the stories’ perpetuated evolution. However, even as time progresses Hawthorne’s contributions have not been put aside to gather dust on New England bookshelves. His narrative innovations affect our storytelling to this day: for example, his addition of Marygold in “The Golden Touch” is the version still being told for this age’s children in story, film, and art. These revisions come to life with every generation’s right to adapt them—just as
Hawthorne says, they are the property of the world to clothe in their own garniture, bringing new life to the core of humanity, from the new beginnings of the world to the beginnings of a nation and the beginnings of a new age.
LITERATURE CITED


