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Trabajo Fin de Grado

“Classical myths as Capital Readings for children: On two mythological books by Nathaniel Hawthorne, A wonder-book for girls and boys (1852) and *Tanglewood Tales* (1853)”

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RESUMEN de “*Classical Myths as Capital Readings for Children: on two Mythological Books by Nathaniel Hawthorne, A Wonder-Book For Boys and Girls (1852) and Tanglewood Tales (1853)*”

El objetivo principal del ensayo es estudiar el uso y la función de la mitología antigua en la literatura inglesa, especialmente la destinada al público infantil. Para ello se han elegido dos libros del autor norteamericano Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864): *A Wonder-Book for Girls and Boys* (1852) y *Tanglewood Tales* (1853). Estos libros han recibido poca atención, por lo cual nos ha parecido oportuno ocuparnos de estas obras prestando especial atención al interés de Hawthorne por las historias mitológicas del mundo grecolatino.

El trabajo consta de tres secciones. En la primera parte presentamos, a modo de introducción, un registro de las ediciones de los dos libros referidos. La segunda sección constituye el núcleo central de nuestro trabajo: estudiamos en primer lugar el contenido y estructura de las dos obras, *A Wonder-Book* y *Tanglewood Tales*. A la hora de analizar la estructura se ha tenido especialmente en cuenta el prefacio de ambos libros, ya que contiene información de carácter programático muy valiosa para tener una idea cabal de la finalidad de ambos libros.

En la tercera sección, llamada *Interpretation*, analizamos los puntos en común que comparte el relato mitológico recreado por Hawthorne en *A Wonder-Book* y *Tanglewood Tales* con la versión más conocida de tales mitos a través de Ovidio y su *Metamorfosis*. También se han estudiado los motivos que llevaron a Hawthorne a componer tales obras a partir de historias mitológicas del mundo antiguo. Uno de los motivos principales tiene que ver con el interés del autor por transmitir los valores morales y sociales de los mitos transformándolos en lecturas apropiadas para niños. Otro aspecto que también hemos procurado destacar es el propio valor artístico de este tipo de relatos, en el sentido de que se trata de “historietas” muy entretenidas para el público infantil por el carácter aventurero y, en ocasiones, fantástico de los protagonistas de tales relatos. Con objeto de contextualizar mejor los dos libros de Hawthorne, no hemos descuidado ofrecer unas breves consideraciones sobre el cultivo de la literatura infantil de temática mitológica en la literatura norteamericana del siglo XIX.

El ensayo también discutirá los procesos que siguió Hawthorne para dar forma a los mitos. El autor añade, omite y modifica información para crear historias aptas para un público juvenil.

La última parte de nuestro trabajo comprende las conclusiones a las que hemos llegado, a saber: el carácter edificante de los mitos antiguos (transmisión de valores morales) y su aplicación didáctica en textos infantiles. A la hora de modificar la forma y estructura de las historias mitológicas, Hawthorne pone especial énfasis en los siguientes aspectos: por un lado, la insistencia en destacar las relaciones entre padres e hijos, consideradas en muchos casos de forma ejemplar. De hecho, casi todos los personajes emparentados se aman entre sí. Por otro lado, Hawthorne ha eliminado a los dioses en el relato de sus obras. Las deidades son representadas como personas sin identidad capaces de lanzar conjuros y conceder deseos. Estos poderes extraordinarios junto con la aparición de monstruos y héroes resultaban atractivos al público joven. La introducción de poderes sobrenaturales puede ser considerados como una influencia directa del Romanticismo, periodo en el que se escribieron *A Wonder-Book* y *Tanglewood Tales*. En este sentido, también hay que señalar que Hawthorne incluye muchas descripciones de parajes naturales que proporcionan más romanticismo a estos libros.

La última parte de las conclusiones tiene que ver con la consideración de *A Wonder-Book* y *Tanglewood Tales* como lecturas para estudiantes actuales. Ambas obras nos parecen bastante apropiadas para que los jóvenes se acerquen a la literatura antigua y susciten su interés por el mundo clásico. A pesar de su enorme interés, no debemos perder de vista los inconvenientes que plantea su lectura, dado que se trata de obras escritas en un inglés de sabor arcaico, propio del siglo XIX, y con un vocabulario complejo (por ejemplo la falta del auxiliar “do” en ciertos tipos de negaciones).

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I. INTRODUCTION

The main goal of this essay is to study the use and function of ancient myths in literature aimed at children. For that purpose, it has been chosen two books by the North American author Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864): *A Wonder-Book for Girls and Boys* (1852) and *Tanglewood Tales* (1853). Little attention has been devoted to any of these two books, so it is worthy to work on them and extract Hawthorne's interest in ancient mythological stories.

The essay has been divided into three different sections. First of all, it provides with a record of the published editions of both books above mentioned. The essay's second section studies the chosen books, starting with *A Wonder-Book* and later commenting on *Tanglewood Tales*. The structure of analysis will consist on contents and structure. In analyzing the structure of the book, the preface has been specially taken into account and commented on, since it contains important information about Hawthorne's inspirations. The third section, called *Interpretation*, has to do with of *A Wonder-Book* and *Tanglewood Tales* and its relation with ancient myths. The essay will consider Hawthorne's main goal of transmitting the moral and social values of myths transforming them into suitable readings for children. Hawthorne considers these values essential for every young student and, as he points out, they make the stories excellent pieces of literature. At the beginning of point three, there is an overview about the use of mythology in literature aimed at children to set Hawthorne in his context. In addition, the processes followed by Hawthorne to reshape the myths will also be discussed and illustrated at this point. The author adds, omits and modifies information in order to create more appropriated stories for young readers from the classical myths. To finish with, the essay includes the conclusions on the main ideas previously studied.

For the quotations of the books above mentioned, it has been consulted in the case of *A Wonder-Book for Girls and Boys* the first edition of 1852 by the publishing house Ticknor, Leed, and Fields (available in Google Books), whereas in *Tanglewood Tales* the edition published in 1921 in Philadelphia by The Penn Published Company¹.

¹ At the end of this essay, there is a reproduction of the title pages of *A Wonder-Book* and *Tanglewood Tales* taken from these two versions.

II. TWO MYTHOLOGICAL BOOKS: A WONDER-BOOK FOR GIRLS AND BOYS (1852) AND TANGLEWOOD TALES (1853)

1. EDITIONS

A Wonder-Book and *Tanglewood Tales* were published by the same publishing house, Ticknor, Leed, and Fields in Boston, just with a year of difference between them, in 1852 and 1853.

It cannot be accurately known whether these books had a good acceptance by the audience of its period, but they seem quite likely to have been famous works inside of the American frame of literature, since some posthumous versions of the books have been published. Nevertheless, if Nathaniel Hawthorne was regarded as writer probably none of these two books would be mentioned as any of his main works.

*A Wonder-Book for Girls and Boys*² was the first of the two books, published in Boston in 1852 by the publishing house Ticknor, Reed and Fields. After the publication of this first version, when the author was already dead, other versions appeared:

- 1885: Boston, New York by Houghton Mifflin and company.
- 1893: Cambridge, printed at the Riverside Press. This version contains sixty illustrations made by Walter Crane.
- 1896: Boston, New York by the publishing house T.Y. Crowell & company.
- 1900: Chicago, by W.B. Conkey company.

There are also more recent publications of the book which have undergone some changes in the title:

- 2003: New York, by the publishing house Dover Publications³.
- 2012: New York, by Barnes and Noble publishing house⁴.

² See the end of the essay: its title page has been attached. It belongs to the first version published of the book *A Wonder-Book for Girls and Boys*. Boston: Ticknor & Fields; 1852.

³ The title of this version is *A Wonder-Book: Heroes and Monsters of Greek Mythology*.

⁴ This title of this version is *Greek Myths: A Wonder Book for Girls and Boys*.

In the case of *Tanglewood Tales*⁵, which is *A Wonder-Book*'s sequel, it was first published in 1853 in Boston by the aforementioned publishing house. These are some posthumous versions of the book:

- 1881: Boston, by Houghton, Mifflin and Company.
- 1898: New York, by the publishing house Maynard, Merrill and co. This version only includes the stories of "The Dragon's teeth" and "The Minotaur."
- 1913: Chicago, by Rand McNally. Illustrations by Milo Winter.
- 1921: Philadelphia, by The Penn Publishing Company.
- 1999: New York, by NY: Tom Doherty Associates. This is the most recent registered version of *Tanglewood Tales*.

There is one version that includes both works which was published 1910 in New York by Duffield and company.⁶

Both books have also been translated into Spanish language in a version that includes the two of them. The title is *El Libro de las Maravillas / Cuentos de Tanglewood*, published in 2013 by Alba Editorial and translated by G. Escodín and M. Salís. There was a previous version from 1999 which only included *Cuentos de Tanglewod* by same publishing house. *Libro de las Maravillas para Niñas y Niños* has also been published alone in 2012 in Barcelona by Acantilado, and translated by M. Cohen.

⁵ See the end of the essay: its title page has been attached. It belongs to the version of *Tanglewood Tales* published in 1921, in Philadelphia by The Penn Publishing Company.

⁶ The title of this version is *A Wonder-Book and Tanglewood Tales for Girls and Boys*.

2. CONTENTS AND STRUCTURE OF *A WONDER-BOOK FOR GIRLS AND BOYS* AND *TANGLEWOOD TALES*

2.1 *A Wonder-Book for Girls and Boys*

2.1.1 Contents of the book

A Wonder-Book for Girls and Boys (1852) is the second book written by Hawthorne aimed at children and the first one dealing with the topic of mythology. As indicated in the book, the author himself claims which would be the publishing house of his book:

“Mr. J. T. Fields (with whom I became acquainted when he was in Berkshire, last summer, and who is a poet, as well as a publisher) will see their uncommon merit at a glance. He will get them illustrated, I hope, by Billings, and will bring them before the world under the very best of auspices, through the eminent house of TICKNOR & Co” (*Wonder-book*, p. 206)

In this book, Hawthorne rewrites six myths from the ancient Greek and Roman culture. As it will be shown later, the sequel named *Tanglewood Tales*, also includes six of these tales on classical myths. In the case of *A Wonder-Book*, the title of the stories are ordered as follows:

- The Gorgon’s Head
- The Golden Touch
- The Paradise of Children
- The Three Golden Apples
- The Miracle Pitcher
- The Chimera

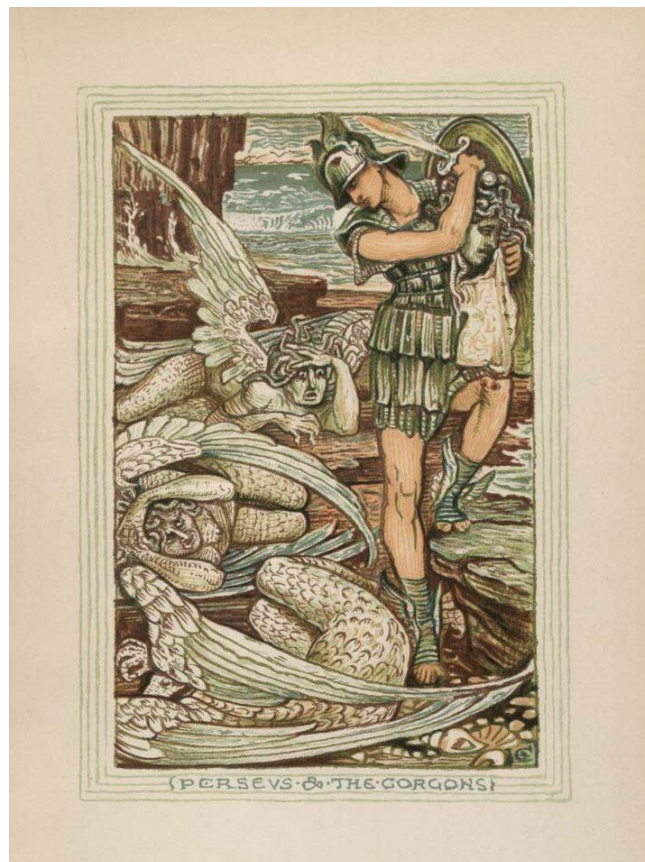
Below the six summaries of the short stories have been included together with some relevant quotations from the book:

The Gorgon's Head:

This is Perseus' story when trying to get Medusa's head. The king Polydectes, who is presented as greedy and crafty, asks Perseus to bring the Gorgon's head for him. The king had saved the life of Perseus' mother, Danae, so Perseus owed him a favor. During his adventure, The hero had to tackle many difficulties to get the head of the monster.

When Perseus comes back from his long adventure, he shows the head to the king and to his evil counselors. All of a sudden they all turn into marble. The king Polydectes is portrayed as Perseus' enemy in the story:

“- Show me the Gorgon's head, or I will cut off your own !- repeated Polydectes [...] And, suddenly holding up the head King Polydectes, his evil counsellors, and all his fierce subjects were no longer anything but the mere images of a monarch and his people. They were all fixed forever” (Wonder-Book, p. 37)



“The Gorgon's head” (*Wonder-Book*.1893, Boston, Houghton and Mifflin. Illustrations by Walter Crane)

The Golden Touch:

This is King Midas' story, one of the very well-known characters from ancient literature. He and his daughter Marygold lived in a castle where everything was made of gold. Nevertheless, the king was not satisfied yet, he needed more gold. One day, a stranger appears and decides to grant Midas one wish to make him happy. King Midas chooses the ability of turning everything into gold. Here is a fragment about this moment:

'I wish everything that I touch to be changed to gold !' 'And will you never regret the possession of it ?' Replied the stranger. 'What could induce me ?' asked Midas. 'I ask nothing else, to render me perfectly happy.' (Wonder-Book, p. 52)

When the time goes by, he realizes that he can neither eat or drink, because everything touched by his body turns immediately into gold. Even his little daughter becomes a golden statue accidentally. He regrets to be this greedy and asks the stranger to eliminate the ability. After diving in a river, he loses the powers and the river gets lots of nuggets in its ground. His daughter comes alive and they live happily forever.

The Paradise of Children:

This story deals with Pandora's box. Epimetheus and Pandora lived in a world where there were no problems. Since there was nothing to harm them, the inhabitants of this world were children and parents were not needed yet. In Epimetheus' cottage, there was a big box that had been brought there by a stranger. The box seemed to be bewitched because Pandora could not stop wondering what was inside of it, even it looked like the illustrations of the box's walls tried to encourage her to open it. The stranger, named Quicksilver, warned Epimetheus not to open the box since he came back from a journey, it could be really dangerous.

Epimetheus tried to convince Pandora not to open the box, but she could not stand this curiosity any longer and she lifted the lid. It contained lots of problems that were spread all over the world. The only positive thing was that Pandora also set Hope free, which was also inside of the box. Hope would help children of the world be persistent during their entire lives, as she says:

“As long as you need me, said Hope, with her pleasant smile, and that will be as long as you live in the world, I promise never to desert you. There may come times and seasons, now and then, when you will think that I have utterly vanished. But again, and again, and again, when perhaps you least dream of it, you shall see the glimmer of my wings on the ceiling of your cottage” (Wonder-Book, p. 97)

The Three Golden Apples:

This story has to do with Hercules and the giant Atlas. In the garden of Hesperides, there was a tree which had golden apples hanging from its branches. Hercules is trust with getting three of them, since he was a hero used to face challenges of this kind.

Looking for the garden, Hercules asks a group of damsels that warns him from the dangers of this adventure. The damsels also tell him that he has to look for the Old One, a creature from the sea that was able to get the shape it wishes, and he will give Hercules some clues about the journey. After some problems trying to catch the Old One, he tells Hercules that he has to look for a giant, and the giant will tell him where the garden is. Once Hercules finds the giant Atlas, this one tries to dissuade Hercules in his pursuit:

“‘What do you want there?’ asked the giant. ‘I want three of the golden apples’ shouted Hercules, ‘for my cousin, the king.’ ‘There is nobody but myself’ quoth the giant, ‘that can go to the garden of the Hesperides, and gather the golden apples’” (Wonder-Book, p. 127)

Atlas is in charge of holding the sky and the only one who can enters in the garden of Hesperides. Hercules has to hold the sky during few minutes, while the giant takes the three apples for him. The giants throws the apples to the floor and Hercules takes them, giving back the sky to Atlas.

The Miraculous Pitcher:

This Philemon and Baucis’ story. They are an old couple that lived in a small cottage. One day, they host two travelers who had been looking for a place to stay for

the night but anyone in the village wanted to host them. Philemon and Baucis give the best they have to the two unknown characters for dinner. The next morning, when they ran out of milk, the pitcher (a container used for holding liquids) that contains it seems to be bottomless. That is the moment when the old couple realizes that the two travelers are not normal human beings.

The two men ask the couple for going to a hill close to the village and few minutes later the village gets flooded by the lake next to there, dragging all the houses and their inhabitants as well. The only house that stayed safe and sound is Philemon and Baucis', which has been turned into a big temple. The two unknown travelers grant the couple a wish: they want to live together and die at the same time, not to see one another dying:

“‘Let us live together, while we live, and leave the world at the same instant, when we die ! For we have always loved one another !' 'Be it so !' replied the stranger” (Wonder-Book, p. 164)

When they eventually died, they turned into trees, able to speak, with the shape of a circular seat where people could rest, and the bottomless pitcher next to the trees to drink milk.

The Chimera:

This is the story of Bellerophon and the winged horse Pegasus. It takes place in Niobe's fountain. Bellerophon is looking for Pegasus, which is supposed to go frequently to the Fountain of Pirene. The fountain is actually a woman that was turned into stone when all her offspring was killed by the hunter Diana, and the water that flows is made of her sorrow.

Bellerophon needs Pegasus because the king of Lycia, in Greece, had asked him for killing a Chimera that was destroying everything, and the only way to kill it was riding the winged horse. He gets to ride the horse becoming good friends. After some time to get used to each other, Pegasus and Bellerophon go to kill the hideous monster. It is a really tough battle but finally they kill the monster. Bellerophon will ride the horse till the end of his life.



“The Chimera” (*Wonder-Book*, 1893, Boston, Houghton and Mifflin. Illustrations by Walter Crane)

2.1.2 Structure of the book

A Wonder-Book for Girls and Boys is preceded by a short preface that will be regarded later. The book presents a peculiar shape, since the short stories in the book are stories framed inside of a main story which is narrated by Nathaniel Hawthorne, whereas the short stories are narrated by one of the characters, Eustace Bright. All of them show the same pattern: firstly, the narrator introduces a situation, which is called *Introductory* to the story, followed by the story itself which is told by the character Bright, and eventually a reflection called *After the story*, which is a kind of conclusion about the previous short story.

There is no an apparent explanation for Hawthorne’s choice of *A Wonder-Book* as the title for this book of myths. It seems quite likely to be a matter of attraction, since

a title like this one would draw children's attention. Children would wonder what kind of miracles or wonderful facts it could contain and they would try to find out by reading it. In fact, what the book contains are amazing stories.

- About the *Introductory*

In the *Introductory* Hawthorne sets the story in a particular moment inside of the main story. The main story is located during the months of Summer, fact that is signaled a few times, but as the time goes by different seasons come. The narrator describes the places, where the characters are in a particular moment (surroundings including woods, mountains and so on) always around Tanglewood, a estate in Berkshire where the main characters spend Summer:

“In the summer time, the shade of so many clustering branches, meeting and intermingling across the rivulet, was deep enough to produce a noontide twilight.” (Wonder-Book, p. 46)

The most important character is Eustace Bright, being the rest secondary ones. He is a university student who tells the stories. The hearers of these stories are his nephews. Eustace Bright is used by Hawthorne as a kind of story-teller. This is the moment in which Hawthorne introduces the character:

“His name (and I shall let you know his real name, because he considers it a great honour to have told the stories that are here to be printed) his name was Eustace Bright. He was a student at Williams College, and had reached, I think, at this period, the venerable age of eighteen years” (Wonder-Book, p. 5)

Hawthorne does not want to give the real name of the children because he finds it inappropriate, so when he talks about any of the children he uses names from flowers like for instance Primrose or Dandelion. By doing that, he is beautifying the children and providing them with energy. As he points out himself, providing the real names could have got him into hot water:

“I am afraid to tell you their names, or even to give them any names which other children have ever been called by ; because, to my certain knowledge, authors sometimes get themselves into great trouble by accidentally giving the names of

real persons to the characters in their books” (Wonder-Book, p. 4)

“The Golden Touch” is the story of King Midas, a man who was able to turn everything into gold just by touching it. The narrator starts by describing in the *Introductory* the golden colors that the tree leaves have at the end of Summer, when the Autumn is about to come. It is easily to infer the relation between the colors of the forest and the following story. That is the way in which Nathaniel connects the stories with its *Introductory*, not to be found abrupt by the readers when introducing the short story about the myth. For instance:

“It had come into his mind as he lay looking upward into the depths of a tree, and observing how the touch of Autumn had transmuted every one of its green leaves into what resembled the purest gold” (Wonder-Book, p. 46)

- About *The After The Story*

As its name points out, *The after the story* is a kind of closure. It is used by Hawthorne in order to create a kind of reflection about the previous myth by means of the characters in the main plot, that is to say, Eustace Bright and his nephews. In most cases, the story-teller and the children simply comment on the features that grab their attention, but in others Eustace Bright highlights the errors that the characters from the myths commit. For instance:

“Eustace says: Would any of you, after hearing this story, be so foolish as to desire the faculty of changing things to gold ?” (Wonder-Book, p. 69)

The last quotation shows that the main theme of the story is not the power of turning everything into gold, the actual theme is King Midas’ greed of being fond of money more than his own daughter.

As in all *The After the Story*, Hawthorne describes again the place and tells us that the characters are moving to another place to keep on telling stories. For example:

“The sun was now an hour or two beyond its noontide mark, and filled the great hollow of the valley with its western radiance, so that it seemed to be brimming with mellow light, and to spill it over the surrounding hill-sides, like golden wine out of a bowl” (Wonder-Book, p. 70)

In the case of “The Golden Touch”, it’s *The After the Story* is named as *Shadow Brook*, because the characters were sitting close to a brook while Eustace Bright was telling the story. In the conclusion of King Midas’ story, the main character asks the rest of the hearers what they learned from the story, or simply what their opinions are about Midas’ behavior.

- About the Preface

The preface of the book is very important in order to understand the use and functions of myths in *A Wonder-Book*. Besides, it provides the readers with essential information about the finality and the content of the book. It can be interpreted that the narrator who is telling the preface and narrates the story is Hawthorne, although it does not have any signature. It is only the date, July 15th 1851, that appears at the end together with the place, Lenox, a small town located in Berkshire Country, Massachusetts.

On the one hand, the narrator tells that the author of the book (which are supposed to be the same person) has been during long time interested in ancient myths, but in this case, myths aimed at children, as the title of the book itself points out. This fact is illustrated by the next quotation:

“The author has long been of opinion that many of the classical myths were capable of being rendered into very capital reading for children In the little volume here offered to the public, he has worked up half a dozen of them, with this end in view.” (Wonder-Book, Preface)

In a letter to Evert A. Duychinck in 1846⁷, Nathaniel Hawthorne points out that the tales have been “*taken out of the cold moonshine of classical mythology, and modernized, or perhaps Gothicized, so that they may be felt by children of those days*”. The metaphor of the ‘*cold moonshine*’ could probably refer to the cruelty or roughness that Greek legends normally possess.

⁷ This information has been taken from the preface of the translation *Libro de las Maravillas para Niñas y Niños*, 2012, Barcelona, Acantilado. The content of the letter has been extracted from the webpage <http://www.forgottenbooks.org>

On the other hand, Hawthorne also talks about the myths and how they have been treated in the book. Firstly, he says that the ancient myths are not affected over the years and that they will be found interesting by anyone who reads them independently of the period in which that person lives. In broad terms, they do not become old-fashioned nor disappear:

“They are marvelously independent of all contemporary modes and circumstances [...] 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” (Wonder-Book, Preface)

Secondly, Hawthorne tells the readers that these myths have been adapted for current readers, in this case children, to better understanding. He points out that this adaptation is a choice of the writer since these books lack of copyright, being older than that. The author declares:

“No epoch of time can claim a copyright in these immortal fables. They seem never to have been made” (Wonder-Book, Preface)

Hawthorne sometimes seems to be justifying his books against what people could think about his adaptation of myths. Probably he knows that some readers could see his bowdlerization of the myths as a kind of insult to the ancient culture and that is why he repeats a few times that myths are from nobody and that he adapts them for a good and useful reason: to entertain children. It has to be taken into account the period of time when Hawthorne published the books. There was not such a freedom as authors own nowadays. The author makes this information explicit by this comment:

“He does not, therefore, plead guilty to a sacrilege, in having sometimes shaped anew, as his fancy dictated, the forms that have been hallowed by an antiquity of two or three thousand years” (Wonder-Book, Preface)

As it can be seen, Hawthorne warns readers that the content of the myths have been in all cases modified and adapted, but not necessarily simplified, signaling the fact that children have much more imagination to interpret every story they are told. Hawthorne points in the preface:

“Children possess an unestimated sensibility to whatever is deep or high, in imagination or feeling, so long as it is simple, likewise. It is only the artificial and the complex that bewilders them” (Wonder-Book, Preface)

As he says, the classical aspect of the myths has almost disappeared in all cases, but it is not regarded as something negative, to the contrary, as something positive. Children are supposed to be the readers of the book so an adaptation to the current period's features will help them understand in a better way the contents of the book. Hawthorne points out:

“In the present version they may have lost much of their classical aspect (or, at all events, the author has not been to preserve it), and have, perhaps, assumed a Gothic or romantic guise.” (Wonder-Book, Preface)

In the last quotation, the narrator declares that the stories could have been turned into Gothic style because they were rewritten during the Romantic period. They are quite likely to have acquired some features that belong to that movement, as mentioned above. An example to justify this idea could be the fact that Hawthorne focuses mainly in children and in their innocence. Almost all the stories that the two books contain have a child as protagonist, and normally they have a close relation with their parents. For instance, Hawthorne creates a daughter for King Midas, character that in the original version does not have offspring, or at least they are not mentioned in the story.

But clearly, the most significant example of Romantic influence in the book would be the huge amount of natural elements included. Hawthorne, before starting narrating any of the stories, describes the places where the characters of the main plot are located, wherever it is, it is usually in the middle of a natural paradise, and the elements being described seem to be part of a fairy tale. Some examples from the book:

“In their progress up the hill, the small people had found enough of violets, blue and white, and some that were as golden as if they had the touch of Midas on them. That sociablest of flowers, the little Houstonia, was very abundant. It is a flower that never lives alone, but which loves its own kind, and is always fond of dwelling with a great many friends and relatives around it.” (Wonder-Book, p. 140)

Considering all the previous information, it can be claimed that the main intention of the preface is to make sure that readers know what they will find in the book, and why the stories have been adapted. It is also used to show how important the myths are to the writer to the extent that he has written a book only about them. Probably, he decided to write this book because there was a little variety of literature published for children, and in that way Hawthorne's book would be unique in this field. The author explains the content of the book by these words:

“Classical myths were capable of being rendered into very capital reading for children. In the little volume here offered to the public, he has worked up half a dozen of them, with this end in view” (Wonder-Book, Preface)

Apart from all the provided information about myths, it can be signaled another goal of the preface. The narrator points out that the book has been written by other person whose name is Eustace Bright. Hawthorne is using this technique to attract the attention of his audience.

Reading the sequel of the book, *Tanglewood Tales*, more information is found out about Eustace Bright who is supposed to be an imaginary character. He is the one who rewrites the myths and adapts them for children's audience and Hawthorne is the editor of both books. While Bright is narrating the stories to Hawthorne, the latter writes them down, adding his personal touch. Hawthorne explains the situation in this way:

“It will be remembered that Mr. Bright condescended to avail himself of my literary experience by constituting me editor of the “Wonder-Book”. [...]“He was now disposed to retain me in a similar position with respect to the present volume, which he entitle Tanglewood Tales” (Tanglewood Tales, p. 6)

Hawthorne is recreating a situation in which a writer without too much experience or success wants other writer more famous to publish his or her work and sign on it. It would mean that Bright wanted to publish his stories under the signature of Hawthorne, since he was already a well-known writer in his period and subsequently the audience would have received the book in a better way. It is pretty obvious the fact that a book published by an famous author would cause more expectation than being published by an anonymous one. Hawthorne declares in the preface:

“My young friend was willing, in short, that the fresh verdure of his growing reputation should spread over my straggling and half-naked boughs”
(*Tanglewood Tales*, p. 6)

Furthermore, two different views are presented to the readers. It cannot be said with total precision what is the real one. On the one hand, Hawthorne would be the one and only writer and he invented a kind of imaginary character in order to attract the attention of readers. This seems quite likely to be the right one, since there is not information about anyone who could have helped Hawthorne write the books. But on the other hand, and as the book tells the readers, Hawthorne would be just the editor of the book and the sequel, knowing actually little about myths or how to adapt them for children. The person who would have done everything would actually be Eustace Bright that would have taken advantage of Hawthorne when publishing the book.

2.2 *Tanglewood Tales*

2.2.1 Contents of the book

As already mentioned, *Tanglewood Tales* is the sequel of *A Wonder-Book for Girls and Boys*. It was first published in August 1853 one year after *A Wonder-Book*. The book does not contain *Introductory* nor *After Story*, as in the case of *A Wonder-Book*. The myths are introduced directly in a row. The six short stories included in this sequel are ordered as follows:

- The Minotaur
- The Pygmies
- The Dragon's Teeth
- Circe's Palace
- The Pomegranate Seeds
- The Golden Fleece

To a better understanding, a summary has been added to explain each of the stories, illustrated with some quotations, just as was done with *A Wonder-Book*:

The Minotaur

This is the well-known story of the Minotaur when it is killed by Theseus. The young Theseus lived in Troezen with his mother Aethra. When he grew up and got strong enough, he traveled to Athens where his father was king. His father told him that fourteen young guys from Athens had to be offered as a sacrifice to a minotaur in the island of Crete because Athens owed that to the king Minos, who was reigning in the island.

Theseus decided to go together with the six boys and the seven girls that were to be sacrificed. He wanted to kill the beast. Theseus entered in the crossroad where the monster was locked and after a tough fight, the young boy killed the minotaur. In order to come back to the entrance of the crossroad, Ariadna, who was king Minos' daughter helped him with a thread ball not to get lost. After becoming a hero, Theseus came back to Athens safe and sound. Right before that, he tried to take Ariadna with him, but she refused his proposal:

"No, Theseus," Ariadna said, pressing his hand, and then drawing back a step or two, "I cannot go with you. My father is old, and has nobody but myself to love him". I have saved you, Theseus, as much for my father's sake as for your own. Farewell! Heaven bless you!" (Tanglewood Tales, p.31)

Theseus' father commits suicide due to a misunderstanding, he thought that his son has found death in managing to kill the beast. As it can be seen, this story presents a tragic end. This is something new in Hawthorne's adaptations, because he normally avoids sad events.

The Pygmies

A giant called Antaeus lived together with a tribe of pygmies in Africa and all of them were offspring of Mother Earth. The giant helped the pygmies with everything they could need. One day Hercules appeared, turned into a giant and fought with Antaeus, who was very surprised and frightened of seeing another giant in the world. Antaeus was killed by Hercules, who was much stronger. The pygmies tried to take revenge by attacking Hercules, but he laughed at them because of their insignificant size. Hercules leaves the place without causing any harm to the little creatures.

The Dragon's Teeth

This tale deals with the kidnapping of Europa by the white bull. Cadmus, Phoenix, Cilix and Europa were playing together when Europa was kidnapped by a white bull. Since they all were brothers, their father King Agenor obliged them to look for their sister. They traveled all over the world together with their mother Queen Telephassa and a friend called Thasus.

All of them started to abandon the quest. The only one who kept on seeking was Cadmus, who finally set in a valley where a dragon attacked and killed his new friends. Cadmus fought against the dragon and won the battle. A voice advised him to plant the dragon's teeth to get new allies from the ground that would help him build a city. Cadmus was rewarded with a castle and a wife since he could not find his daughter Europa. The following quotation illustrates the moment in which Cadmus is advised to use the dragon's teeth:

“‘Cadmus,’ said a voice but whether it came from above or below him, or whether it spoke within his own breast, the young man could not tell—‘Cadmus, pluck out the dragon’s teeth, and plant them in the earth’ ” (Tanglewood Tales, p. 70)

Circe's Palace

This is one of the most famous stores from Ulysses' adventures. When Ulysses was trying to come back home from Troy, he had to tackle some amazing difficulties. One day, Ulysses and his vassals got to an island. They all were starving and the haft of his men decided to enter in a castle in the middle of the island to look for food. A beautiful woman that lived there invited them to have dinner. They all turned into pigs after having the dinner. The woman called Circe had turned them all into pigs by using a powerful potion.

When seeing that his vassal did not come back, Ulysses decided to go in his own. Before entering, Quicksilver appeared and tell him to smell a flower not to be transform into animal. Ulysses did so and he did not turn into beast. He has won the witch Circe, and managed to rescue his vassals. The crew became human beings again when Circe casted a healing spell.

The Pomegranate seeds

This is Proserpina and Pluto's story. Mother Ceres' daughter, Proserpina, was gathering flowers with some nymphs when she got kidnapped by King Pluto, who took her to his kingdom. Mother Ceres looked for her during 6 months, without getting any clue. Being full of grief, she decided not to produce any plant in the earth. Seeing this, Quicksilver went to King Pluto's kingdom to take Proserpina and give her back to her mother, since the planet was being drained. But Proserpina had already eaten a pomegranate there, and the magic law said that if someone ate something in King Pluto's territory, they would be obliged to live there forever. That is why Proserpina, who had somewhat fallen in love with Pluto, had to stay six months with her mother, and six months with in King Pluto. Proserpina had fallen in love irrationally with King Pluto, despite she had been kidnapped and was living in bad conditions:

“Do not speak so harshly of poor King Pluto,” said Prosperina, kissing her mother. “He has some very good qualities; and I really think I can bear to spend six months in his palace, if he will only let me spend the other six with you”
(*Tanglewood Tales*, p.126)

The Golden Fleece

This story presents the difficulties tackled by Jason and the Argonauts to get the Golden Fleece. Trying to get the throne back that his father lost, Jason had to travel to Iolchos where King Pelias was unfairly reigning. When he got there, King Pelias told him that if he wanted the throne back, (Since Jason deserved it) he had to get the Golden Fleece. For that purpose, he organized a group of forty-nine men, called Argonauts, and traveled by vessel to the island where the Golden Fleece was.

In that island an evil king and his daughter Medea lived. To get the Golden Fleece, Jason had to tame some bulls of fire. Medea, who was a kind of witch, helped him. After that, he had to kill a dragon that protected the tree where the Golden Fleece hung. Medea enchanted the dragon, which immediately fell asleep, and Jason took the Golden Fleece. Right after that, Jason and the Argonauts left the island in the vessel and came back to Iolchos with the prize.

2.2.2 Structure of the book

Unlike *A Wonder-Book*, *Tanglewood Tales* is preceded by a longer preface (more than five pages). The six stories of the book are not separated or linked between each other, which means that it lacks of *Introductory* and *The After the Story*, not being that the case of *A Wonder-Book*. When a story ends, another is told straightaway and the extension of all of them is around thirty pages in the version used in this essay. Neither does it have a story-teller. The person who narrates the adaptations of the myths is not clarified, not being the aforementioned Eustace Bright.

Probably Hawthorne made up his mind and changed the structure to a simple one because he did not want to create any kind of confusion that *A Wonder-Book* could have already arisen. Introducing, telling and closing stories should have been a tough task to be carried out but also not so easy to understand by readers of short age.

- About the Preface: “The Wayside”

In the introduction to *Tanglewood Tales*, Nathaniel presents the moment in which he decided to write this book. He had been visited during Winter holidays by one of his friends, Eustace Bright, from Berkshire where the author lived during a period of time. Hawthorne compares Berkshire’s landscapes with the ones from the places where he is living now (not mentioned in the book). Hawthorne introduces Eustace Bright in these lines:

“A short time ago, I was favored with a flying visit from my young friend Eustace Bright, whom I had not before met with since quitting the breezy mountains of Berskshire.” (*Tanglewood Tales*, p. 6)

It can be claimed that Hawthorne named the preface as *The Wayside* because he lived in a house named like this in Concord, Massachusetts. The author gives readers some information and details about how they spent the summer in that region and also about their personal lives:

“A few summer weeks among mountains, a lifetime among green meadows and placid slopes, with outlines forever new, because continually fading out of the memory—such would be my sober choice” (*Tanglewood Tales*, p. 5)

The character Eustace Bright had been presented in the previous book *A Wonder-Book for Girls and Boys*, but in that case his identity was not totally clarified neither was his relation with Hawthorne. It is now when Hawthorne decides to provide the readers with more information about that person. According to the preface, Eustace Bight is a Hawthorne's friend from Berkshire and now is when it is found out that Bright brings him stories and Hawthorne writes them down:

“‘But, by the by, have you added any more legends to the series, since the publication of the ‘Wonder-Book’?’ ‘Many more,’ said Eustace ‘Better chosen, and better handled’” (*Tanglewood Tales*, p. 5)

In relation to his biography, Hawthorne lived in Berkshire during few years, but being tired of the place, he decided to move. During that period of time, he was residing temporally in a renting estate located in Berkshire, Massachusetts, place repeatedly mentioned in the preface of the book. When Hawthorne published the book with the name of *Tanglewood Tales*, the estate was named by his owner in the same way.

The reason that leaded Hawthorne to use this name was probably the vegetation of that area in Berkshire, which is full of tangled trees. This fact is not mentioned in any of the two books. Hawthorne only makes a little reference to the title that does not clarify anything.

By means of a dialogue between Hawthorne and Eustace Bright, the latter convinced him about the idea that myths are important for the social and moral development of children, saying that he uses to tell this kind of stories to his children. Maybe, this is the fact that triggers Hawthorne's interest in this kind of stories. To Hawthorne, as he points out himself, the literature from ancient times, that is to say, the Greek and Latin one, is nothing but boring and melancholic, and he wonders:

“Was such material the stuff that children's plaything should be made of! How were they to be purified? How was the blessed sunshine to be thrown into them?”. (*Tanglewood Tales*, p. 7)

Moreover, these myths are the basis of most stories from every period that contain sorrow, crime and misfortune, as Hawthorne says:

“When the first poet or romancer told these marvellous legends (such is Eustace Bright’s opinion), it was still the Golden Age. Evil had never yet existed; and sorrow, misfortune, crime, were mere shadows which the mind fancifully created for itself, as a shelter against too sunny realities” (Tanglewood Tales, p. 7)

Just as happened with the preface of *A Wonder-Book*, he is preparing the reader for what they are going to read: A book of myths adapted for a children’s audience. This would be considered as the aim of the preface.

3. INTERPRETATION

In this section, it will be carried out an interpretation about the way in which Nathaniel Hawthorne adapted and reshaped the myths included in *A Wonder-Book for Girls and Boys* and *Tanglewood Tales*. But firstly, to create a picture of the whole situation the period in which Hawthorne lived, it will be comment on the different authors that used myths and it will help to understand how the outlook looked like.

3.1 Children's books on ancient literature⁸

It can be said that the first American author to write books aimed at children based on Greek and Roman myths was Nathaniel Hawthorne. As said before, he wrote his books in 1851 *A Wonder-Book for Girls and Boys* and in 1852 *Tanglewood Tales*. Since children literature was not so developed during the nineteenth century in America, he could be also considered as one of the first writers related to children's books. His first book dealing with this topic was *The Whole History of Grandfather's Chair*. Nevertheless, Hawthorne is not so well-known for being writer of children's book, rather books aimed at other groups of people.

Some other authors treated the myths in the same way, transforming them into entertaining readings for children. Charles Kingsley, a priest of the church of England, born in Devon, wrote in 1855 *The heroes or Greek Fairy Tales for My Children*. In this book, he presents some myths about the lives of Perseus, the Argonauts, and Theseus and also wants his readers to know where myths come from:

"That 'Greeks' was not their real name. They called themselves always 'Hellens,' but the Romans miscalled them Greeks; and we have taken that wrong name from the Romans" (*The Heroes*, p. 2)

Another important author who considered that Greek myths are necessary to the understanding of English and American literature is Thomas Bulfinch, who was born in Massachusetts. In this case, his books are not only aimed at children but also to older

⁸Two studies have been consulted: WADSWORTH, S. *In the Company of Books: Literature and Its "Classes" in Nineteenth-Century America*. 1963, Massachusetts, University of Massachusetts Press; SCOTT MACLEOD, A. *American Childhood: Essays on Children's Literature of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. 1994, Georgia, University of Georgia Press.

people. His main book dealing with this topic is *The Age of Fable, or Stories of Gods and Heroes* published in 1855.

Apart from these three main authors, there are others like Flora Cooke with her book *Nature Myths and Stories for Little Children*⁹ published in 1895. In this book, the author rewrites more than twenty-five myths aimed at school students, as can be read in the preface:

“The following stories are suggested in the standard books of mythology and poetry, and have been tested and found to be very helpful in the first and third grades” (*Nature Myths*, Preface)

Along the same lines, it is worthy to mention M. E. Burt, with her book *Stories from Plato and Other Classical Writers* published in 1895, and C. Harding. and S. Harding, who wrote together *Stories of Greek Gods, Heroes, and Men: A Primer of Mythology and History of the Greeks* in 1897.

3.2 Use and function of myths aimed at children

It was not the first time that Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote a book aimed at children. As previously mentioned, he entered in the market of children's books with *The Whole History of Grandfather's Chair*, also called, *True stories from New England History 1620-1808*, published in 1841 in Boston by the publishing house E.P. Peabody. In this case, just as he did in *A Wonder-Book for Girls and Boys*, Hawthorne chooses a character as story-teller to narrate some event about American history, which include some moral teaching. In the preface, Hawthorne explains:

“The author's desire has been to describe the eminent characters and remarkable events of our annals in such a form and style that the young may make acquaintance with them of their own accord” (*Grandfather's Chair*, Preface p. 4)¹⁰

⁹ The following edition has been consulted in Google Books: COOKE, F.J. *Nature Myths and Stories for Little Children*, 1895, Chicago, A. Flanagan. (Taken from www.Gutenberg.org)

¹⁰ Consulted version: Hawthorne, N. *The Whole History of Grandfather's Chair or True Stories Form New England*, 2004, Pennsylvania, An Electronic Classic Series Publication.

Considering the fact that the stories are aimed at children, which are supposed to be the audience of *A Wonder-Book* and *Tanglewood Tales*, a precise relation between the plots can be found. The majority of the stories shares a similar pattern: A hero who wins something or has to fight against some kind of monster in order to establish the normal order of things.

For instance, in the case of “The Minotaur” (included in *Tanglewood Tales*), Theseus kills the beast, saving human lives and gets everybody’s respect. The same happens in the story called “The Chimera”(found in *A Wonder-Book*), Bellerophon has to kill the monster to save the world, and so he does.

If all the stories were seen through child’s eyes, they would look quite attractive. This is the kind of plot that grabs a child’s attention; a hero that kills a monster, and in most cases falls happily in love with a beautiful women, as Theseus does with Ariadna, or simply lives happily forever, as in “The Miraculous Pitcher”, in which Philemon and Baucis live safe and sound for the rest of their lives since they have been good people. Maybe the stories can contain some bitter events, but in most of the cases they end happily.

Despite the fact that Greek mythology has lots of different myths, having different topics and endings, the author decided to choose the most appropriated ones for children. If the chosen myths were related to more complex topics maybe the book would not be appropriate for children’s minds. For instance, the moment in which Medea avenges her husband’s betrayal, murdering their children in horrible circumstances. Whether Nathaniel would like to include this story in the book, he would have had to adapt the official version eliminating scabrous details. The author does not look for complex topics, and what is more, if one of the myths contains a bitter event, he softens it in order not to upset the audience.

3.2.1 Value of the twelve stories for a children’s audience

As in the majority of books aimed at children, they normally contain some relevant values, behaviors to be followed or avoided by their young readers. It is also well-known that ancient myths were used in order to warn readers about what they should or should not do, that is to say, the important value of exemplification that

contain. They were a kind of mirror which readers should trust or, on the other hand, avoid in any circumstance.

In some occasions, when narrating the short stories, Hawthorne addresses the readers directly with some kind of wise advises. The narrator talks to children to make sure that they behave properly. For example:

“Jason resolved to seek his fortune in the world, without asking Chiron’s advice, or telling him anything about the matter. This was very unwise, to be sure; and I hope none of you, my little hearers, will ever follow Jason’s example” (Tanglewood Tales, p.128)

In this extract, Hawthorne wants his readers to follow their teachers indications and not to act boldly as they may like to. Another example of this moral teaching, but this time a little bit more implicit, could be the moment in Circe’s story when the witch turns into pigs Ulysses’ crew and she says:

“‘Wretches,’ cried she, ‘you have abused a lady’s hospitality; and in this princely saloon your behavior has been suited to a hog-pen.’ ” (Tanglewood Tales, p. 89)

The group of mariners have been punished because they have been greedy. A person invited them and they abuse of her kindness. The message that could be inferred from this story is that children should not be greedy. If a person acts greedily, he or she is quite likely to be punished.

Whereas some myths are used explicitly to show what a person should not do, others are used to exemplify models of behavior. A clear example is the relation between Bellerophon and Pegasus. After being traveling around the world together, they get to be very good friends trusting one another, as can be seen in this text:

“Pegasus and Bellerophon were friends, and put loving faith in one another. That night they lay down and slept together, with Bellerophon’s arm about the neck of Pegasus, not as a caution, but for kindness.” (Wonder-Book, p. 237)

On the one hand, some stories do not need to be considered from the moral exemplification since they do not actually contain any value of this kind, for instance “The Minotaur” or “The Three Golden Apples”. They just present some marvelous facts

about their characters. On the other, it is true that some others have a considerable amount of moral teaching inside, for example “Circe’s Palace”, “The Golden Touch” or “The Paradise of Children”.

3.2.2 Hawthorne’s adaptation of myths

○ Introduction

A Wonder-Book and *Tanglewood Tales* contain an amount of twelve stories, and all of them have been adapted and modified in order to soften the aggressiveness or cruelty that they could contain. As been previously explained, to make them appropriate for child-like audience.

But Hawthorne does not provide any kind of detail about this process. It is mentioned by him in the preface of *Tanglewood Tales* that the person who created the stories was actually his friend Bright, and Hawthorne points out that he did not tell him how he managed to adapt them and make them suitable. As Bright says, when he starts to narrate any of them, they reshape themselves and become suitable for children:

“But Eustace told me that these myths were the most singular things in the world, and that he was invariably astonished whenever he began to relate one, by the readiness with which it adapted itself to the childish purity of his auditors [...] Thus the stories transform themselves, and re-assume the shapes which they might be supposed to possess in the pure childhood of the world.”
(*Tanglewood Tales*, p. 7)

These comments do not clarify the metamorphosis that the stories underwent, leaving the process still unknown for readers. Probably Hawthorne uses Eustace Bright in this case as a kind of shield in order not to provide with information, blaming another person for the lack of details. It can be said that a process like this one might be quite complicated to fulfill; stories that are actually short lengthen in order to be narrated, and all the inappropriate content is removed and substituted for others more convenient.

In the after story of “The Three Golden Apples” from *A Wonder-Book*, one of the characters asks Eustace Bright how and why he dares add details like a giant to the story, and Bright answers that he just felt like doing it:

“I described the giant as he appeared to me,” replied the student, rather piqued. And, sir, if you would only bring your mind into such a relation with these fables as is necessary in order to remodel them, you would see at once that an old Greek had no more exclusive right to them than a modern Yankee has. They are the common property of the world, and of all time” (Wonder-Book, p. 136)

The same idea is mentioned a few times in the book, as Hawthorne points out:

“My own opinion is, that the Greeks, by taking possession of these legends (which were the immemorial birthright of mankind), and putting them into shapes of indestructible beauty” (Wonder-Book, p. 136)

That is, Hawthorne defends himself for having modified the original plot of myths, a modification that could be considered a soft version of myths. One of those possible detractors is the character Mr. Pringle, used in *A Wonder-Book* to argue with the story-teller Eustace Bright about the creation of tales out of myths. To Mr. Pringle, modifying these myths is a big error and Bright should immediately stop doing that. By means of this character, Hawthorne is justifying even more the use of mythology and its transformation into children’s tales. Mr. Pringle says:

“The effect is like bedaubing a marble statue with paint. This giant, now ! How can you have ventured to thrust his huge, disproportioned mass among the seemly outlines of Grecian fable, the tendency of which is to reduce even the extravagant within limits, by its pervading elegance ?” (Wonder-Book, p. 135)

Independently of how Hawthorne managed to rewrite the stories, he did it perfectly. They seem to be, and in fact they are, perfect stories for children. They are engaging and contain the kind of elements that every children’s book should have.

- Examples of re-adaptation of myths

To a better understanding of how Hawthorne carried out this process of re-adaptation and how the myths have undergone all these changes without losing their essence, Hawthorne’s stories could be compared with Ovid’s myths narration of *Metamorphoses*, considered as the official version par excellence of ancient mythology.

The sources that influenced Hawthorne are almost unknown. He does not mention any fact that could influence him neither does any book nor author. The only thing that he says about is that one character included in the books, Eustace Bright, is a student of Ancient Greek and Latin culture, fact that justifies the knowledge on mythology. In the *Introductory* to the short story “The Gorgon’s head”, Hawthorne as the narrator comments on the ability when telling stories, what he says is:

“Working up his sophomorical erudition with a good deal of tact, and incurring great obligations to Professor Anthon, he nevertheless disregarded all classical authorities, whenever the vagrant audacity of his imagination impelled him to do so” (*Wonder-Book*, p. 8)

Considering this information, it seems true that the author could have been influenced in the creation of *A Wonder-Book* and *Tanglewood Tales* by the American classical scholar Charles Anthon, mentioned in the previous quotation. He was the editor of *A Classical Dictionary*, published in 1825¹¹. *A Classical Dictionary* is mainly based on ancient Greek culture, explaining the origins of the world till the Roman empire from the mythological point of view. The biggest part of the book is a dictionary on names from Greek and Latin culture.

On the other hand, it is not known the version on which Hawthorne is based when rewriting his myths. It has been considered as a good point to compare the differences between four short stories chosen from *A Wonder-Book* and *Tanglewood Tales* with those from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. By doing this, the adaptations that follow the writer to attract children would be easy detected.

As a general pattern, although there are differences between the stories, what the author does is to lengthen the myths turning them into stories that can perfectly be narrated. He also transforms the facts that do not look appropriate for him and adds new ones that he considers as suitable. As mentioned previously, his purpose is to please young audiences by using myths that otherwise would not be easily read by them.

¹¹ The whole title of the book is: *A Classical Dictionary containing a full Account of all the Proper Names mentioned in Ancient Authors or Bibliotheca Classica*. The main author is John Lemprière, being Anthon its editor.

The Minotaur

The plot of the story rewritten by Hawthorne is quite similar to the one found in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Minotaur: Book VIII) but in order to turn the myth into a story, the author introduces a biography of Theseus, narrating his life from his birth till the moment he kills the minotaur. This fact will easily make the readers familiarize with the protagonist and even more since he is a child like them:

“From his earliest remembrance, Aethra used to go with little Theseus into a wood, and sit down upon a moss-grown rock, which was deeply sunken into the earth. Here she often talked with her son about his father, and said that he was called Aegeus, and that he was a great king” (Tanglewood Tales, p. 9)

In this version, Theseus' mother Aethra plays an important role in the story since all his childhood is told in detail and the hero grows up at home with her. The relation between parents and offspring is one of the most important topic in the book. Normally, they all have a good relation and love each other. The narrator says:

“After affectionately embracing his mother, he set forth with a good many of her tears glistening on his cheeks, and some, if the truth must be told, that had gushed out of his own eyes” (Tanglewood Tales, p.12-13)

The writer focuses on the moment in which Theseus fights against the monster, showing the amazing strength of the man, just as it has been done in the rest of the story. Theseus is presented as a supernatural being, his abilities are not the ones that an ordinary human being would have and he can easily overcome every trouble he gets into.

Something interesting that Hawthorne decides to modify, is the decisive moment in which Theseus leaves Crete after killing the minotaur. According to the text presented by Ovid, the protagonist kidnaps Ariadne and later abandons her in a deserted island. The writer here changes the plot, clarifying that Theseus is a noble man, and making sure that Ariadne did not get on the vessel. The narrators addresses the readers and points out:

“Now, some low-minded people [...] have the face to say that this royal and honorable maiden did really flee away [...] that Prince Theseus ungratefully deserted Ariadne, on a solitary island” (Tanglewood Tales, p. 31)

The writer does so not to upset or offend children. He wants his heroes to be heroes and not criminals. Nevertheless, Ovid shows the real nature of human beings; they have a good side, but they also could have a negative one. What Hawthorne wants is to purify the character to obtain noble people.

The Golden Touch

This is the story of the King Midas, who was granted with the ability of turning everything into gold just by touching it. Hawthorne adds new occurrences, like for example the existence of Midas' daughter, named Marygold, whose name is used as a metaphor of the greedy passion for gold that Midas has. Once more Hawthorne emphasizes the relation between father-daughter that was inexistent in the original myth. In this case he focuses on King Midas who is the father, although normally Hawthorne would focus on children. When the problems eventually disappear in the story, both father and daughter live happy for the rest of their lives.

There are smaller details that are present in the oldest version of the myth and Hawthorne has decided to preserve them. For instance the moment in which Midas dives into the river in order to give up on the ability. It shows that Hawthorne wants to keep the essence of the story. As it is portrayed in the book:

*“‘Tell me, now, do you sincerely desire to rid yourself of this Golden Touch ?’
‘Go, then,” said the stranger, ‘and plunge into the river that glides past the bottom of your garden’ ” (Wonder-Book, p. 85)*

In Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Book XI) Midas is known for having intercourses with groups of people. It is easy to guess that Hawthorne had to remove this part from the story since that would not be appropriate for children.

The Gorgon's head

This short story is about Perseus and Medusa. The king Polydectes, who is presented as greedy and crafty, asks Perseus to bring the Gorgon's head for him. In the past, the king Polydectes saved Danae and Perseus' life. When Perseus comes from his long adventure, he shows the head to the king and to his evil counselors and they all turn into marble.

The modifications that author includes here are quite a few since the majority of the facts presented in Hawthorne's story do not exist in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Perseus: Book IV-V), for instance, the relation between Danae and Perseus, which in the original version of the myth does not exist, or the fact that Polydectes threatens Danae and her son, becoming the evil character in the story. These transformations are used in order to provide the story with some attractive elements that make it engaging. For instance:

"King Polydectes was not good and kind, like his brother the fisherman, but extremely wicked, he resolved to send Perseus on a dangerous enterprise, in which he would probably be killed, and then to do some great mischief to Danae herself" (Tanglewood Tales, p. 16)

All the difficulties and challenges that the protagonist has to suffer would turn him into a hero for young readers. There are more events added like the use of Medusa's head to petrify the evil population of the city.

The miraculous pitcher

This story is likely to be the less modified of all the stories included in *A Wonder-Book* or in *Tanglewood Tales*. Maybe Hawthorne decides not to change anything from the original plot because this story is one of the most beautiful ones. The story of Philemon and Baucis shows the endless ability of human beings to love and to be loved. Both characters are a clear sample of pure hearts.

Nevertheless, there are some variations comparing with the official version of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Book VIII). For instance, Mercury is called in this version Quicksilver, name that appears a few times along the book but his real identity is never specified. The author does so because he does not want to present any deity in his book,

they are just beings with supernatural powers. Hawthorne also changes the wine for milk, what means that the bottomless pitcher of wine now is filled with milk in Hawthorne's version, again to soften a little bit the effects, since children should not drink wine. As it is portrayed:

“‘Why it appears to me’ cried Quicksilver, ‘starting up from table and taking the pitcher by the handle, it really appears to me that matters are not quite so bad as you represent them. Here is certainly more milk in the pitcher.’” (Wonder-Book, p. 155)

Turning to a more general view, one of the main news added by Hawthorne to all his stories is the substitution of Gods by singular people. Hawthorne was born in a Puritan family and the majority of his books, including *The Scarlet Letter*, has as a main topic religion. In this case, none of these two books contain religious elements, what is more, they could be considered as pagan books.

Hawthorne removes every image that makes explicit reference to Gods from Greek or Latin religion. He presents deities as people that have powers like granting wishes. There are no gods or goddesses, just strange people without identity, and in most cases even the names are not given.

In King Midas' story, the name of Bacchus is not present; and readers do not find out where this character comes from:

“Be it as you wish, then,' replied the stranger, waving his hand in token of farewell. ' To-morrow, at sunrise, you will find yourself gifted with the Golden Touch” (Wonder-Book, p. 52)

Hawthorne tends to eliminate all these elements because he wants his stories to be more attractive. Characters that own supernatural powers is what actually gets audience. Here a quotation that makes reference directly to that topic:

“In those days, when the earth was comparatively a new affair, it was supposed to be often the resort of beings endowed with supernatural power, and who used to interest themselves in the joys and sorrows of men, women, and children, half playfully and half seriously” (Wonder-Book, p. 50)

Probably the supernatural abilities are also highlighted because of the Romantic influence that the myths have undergone. The unbelievable facts are one of the main features during the Romantic period and both Hawthorne's book are been affected by it.

4. CONCLUSIONS

It can be claimed that Hawthorne has been able to create excellent pieces of writing out of myths that are more than twenty centuries old. It could be assured that the process of adapting the stories avoiding facts and adding others should have been a tough one. The way in which the author has managed to adapt the ancient myths for a young audience has been regarded in the essay. Nevertheless, Hawthorne does not mention anything that could have been used to facilitate this process.

A Wonder-Book, just as *Tanglewood Tales*, contains the essence of classical myths portrayed in twelve narrated stories that are extremely well-known by every reader of myths. The only exception is “The pygmies”, which is not so known. Nevertheless, this story can be considered as the funniest one. It creates a distinction since Hawthorne places this story between others that are considered a bit tragic.

Both books keep the moral and social value that the ancient mythology tries to transmit, that is to say, the power of exemplification used during centuries in order to teach young students the correct way of behaving. Hawthorne seems to be quite attracted by children; the way in which they see the world, and in this case the reaction to the stories. The author explores through his books how literature can be pleasant for children to get them into the reading habit. The important relation that has been established by Hawthorne between mythology and children is made explicit by means of these words:

“Children are now the only representatives of the men and women of that happy era (The Golden Age); and therefore it is that we must raise the intellect and fancy to the level of childhood, in order to re-create the original myths”
(*Tanglewood Tales*, p. 7)

Hawthorne uses the relations between parents and offspring as one of the basis of his tales. In most cases, the main characters of the myths’ adaptations have children or lives with his or her parents. The relation between them is quite emphasized, being always a good relationship of love and mutual respect. For example, King Midas has a daughter named Marygold, who does not exist in the official version of the myth.

The elimination of deities is a feature that characterizes Hawthorne’s adaptations and makes them unique. As mentioned previously in the essay, the author eliminates

gods and goddesses from myths when they are turned into tales. They become strangers who own supernatural abilities. For instance, Quicksilver (playing Mercury's role) is introduced in some of the stories, but his identity is not specify:

“‘I have helped a good many young men through adventures that looked difficult enough beforehand’ said the stranger ‘Perhaps you may have heard of me. I have more names than one ; but the name of Quicksilver suits me as well as any other’ ” (Wonder-Book, p. 22)

This supernatural abilities are elements used to draw children's attention. Nothing is better to encourage children to read than people who are able to cast spells and use them as they wish. Some of them become heroes thanks to their amazing skills, but in these cases the identities are known, like for example Theseus or Jason. Supernatural events like monsters or magical powers do not have a logical explanation in any of the books, they occur as something normal present in everyday life. This is an influence from the Romantic movement in which *A Wonder-Book* and *Tanglewood Tales* were written. Another important influence from the Romantic period is the large amount of descriptions about natural places likes lakes, rivers, forest, mountains and so on. Nature is important, and seems to provide the narration with life.

Considering *A Wonder-Book* and *Tanglewood Tales* as current readings for young students, they can be considered quite suitable. The books do not look obsolete and they do not seem likely to become old-fashioned since they contain the kind of literature that would anyway be accepted by this type of audience. Nevertheless, the vocabulary used by Hawthorne could be found sometimes a little complex. He does not use easy words, and it could arise problems for his young readers. Some examples could be:

“Working up his sophomorical erudition with a good deal of tact, and incurring great obligations to Professor Anthon, he, nevertheless, disregarded all classical authorities, whenever the vagrant audacity of his imagination impelled him to do so” (Wonder-Book, p. 14)

Additionally, it is worthy to mention the use of archaic forms that were still used during the 19th century and they have undergone changes to become the nowadays' expressions. The morphology used is from Early Modern English, that took

place during the 15th century till nowadays. For instance, the use of pronouns such as “thou, thyself and thee”. They are not used by Hawthorne in the prefaces of any of the books, neither do the characters when narrating by themselves the stories about myths. Some examples:

“- Now, my beloved Pegasus,' he whispered in the winged horse's ear,- thou must help me to slay this insufferable monster ; or else thou shalt fly back to thy solitary mountain-peak without thy friend Bellerophon” (Wonder-Book, p. 196)

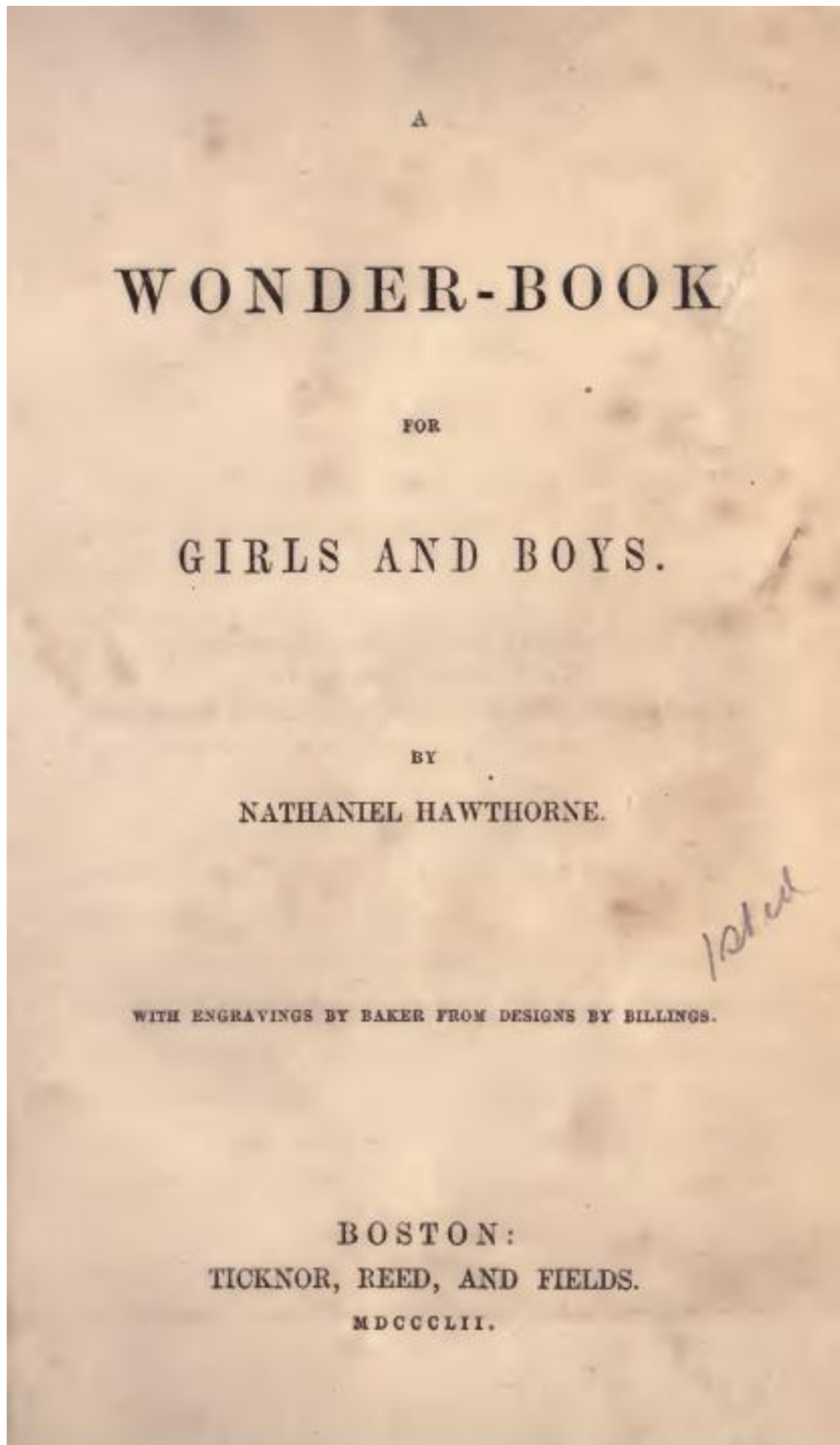
Other important feature from Early Modern English is the negation without auxiliary verb “do”. Although the use of “do” was already established, it was not obligatory. For example: “*I know not whether Pandora expected any toys*” (Wonder-Book, p.87).

To sum up, it is explicit in both *A Wonder-Book* and *Tanglewood Tales* the idea that myths are important for the social and moral development of children. As pointed out previously, myths contain rich knowledge about the correct or incorrect ways of behaving. Maybe, this is the fact that encourages Hawthorne’s interest in this kind of stories to the extent that he creates two books based on them. Hawthorne wants to transmit these moral values to next generations.

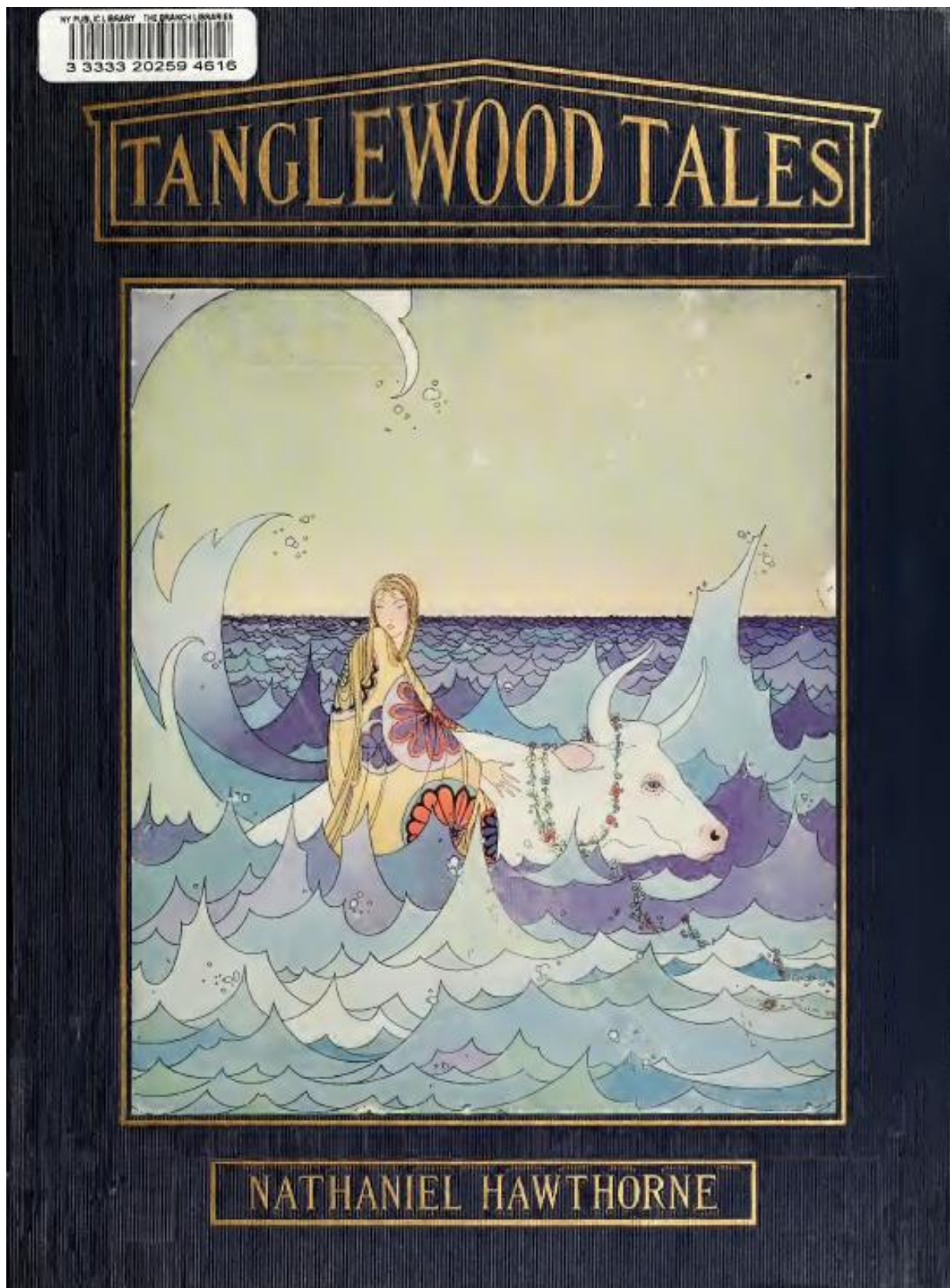
This idea that myths are appropriate readings for children is highlighted by Hawthorne when he declares: *many of the classical myths were capable of being rendered into very capital reading for children In the little volume here offered to the public, he has worked up half a dozen of them, with this end in view.*” (Wonder-Book, Preface). That is the reason why the words *capital reading for children* have been chosen as title of this essay on the use and function of ancient mythology in English literature.

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