

## ABDUCTIONS IN NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE'S LITERATURE

JULIETA OJEDA ALBA  
Universidad de La Rioja

### ABSTRACT

The American nineteenth-century author Nathaniel Hawthorne was preoccupied primarily with the past and its influence on the present, with the nature of sin, and with the effects of guilt on individuals. In these themes he found the substance for much of his work. He was rarely associated with childhood and, with the exception of Pearl, his child characters and his children's stories were little heeded. However, some critics in the last decade have realised that his biography betrays an unusual interest in little girls, and that this fondness influenced the writings of his maturity in a crucial way. This brief study argues that these aspects were already at work in some of his earlier literature.

Nathaniel Hawthorne's lifelong interest in children is well established today. The fact burst upon the readers when the *Centenary Edition* made the complete collection of extant notebooks and letters readily available. This collection is overflowing with significant references to childhood; *The American Notebooks* volume alone includes over 100 entries containing ideas pertaining

to childhood in one way or another.<sup>1</sup> In his creative work more than fifty child characters can be found, and he also wrote a number of children's stories, many devoid of child characters, but in which the intended youthful audience was ever present in the mind of the author during composition, thus dominating the general tone of the work. These children's stories were mostly published in four collections: *The Whole History of Grandfather's Chair*, *Biographical Stories*, *A Wonderbook for Girls and Boys* and *Tanglewood Tales*.

The present article briefly discusses Hawthorne's interest in children, particularly little girls, and the literary implications of this possibly pathological inclination as reflected in some of his early works. We will centre this study on short stories, but some novels such as *Fanshawe* and *The Blithedale Romance* will also be commented upon. Some of these works have been traditionally slighted as minor, yet they are invaluable if only because they contain aspects that would later permeate much of Hawthorne's literature including his latest and unfinished creations *Doctor Grimshawe's Secret* and *The Dolliver Romance*.

It is a matter of curiosity, and one which hints at conscious concealment, that given the wealth of evidence bearing witness to this bias of Hawthorne's, very few of his friends and relatives appear to have noticed it during his lifetime. Readers also remained unaware. As far as we can tell it was the publication of «Little Annie's Ramble» which elicited the earliest acknowledgement of his partiality from one of his friends. Horatio Bridge, responding to Hawthorne's avowal in this tale that he had a smile that children loved, wrote to the author in manifest perplexity: «Have you a smile that is more winning to children than other men's? I don't remember to have heard you say anything about your partiality for children».<sup>2</sup> The tone of surprise unequivocally demonstrates that Hawthorne's partiality in this matter had not been previously detected. Another person who noticed it at about the same time was Sophia Peabody, and she did not make any inferences or connections either. His wife-to-be innocently wrote to her sister a now famous observation: «Mr. Hawthorne said he wished he could have intercourse with some beautiful children, —beautiful little girls; he did not care for boys.»<sup>3</sup> Sophia's total ab-

<sup>1</sup> Ohio University Press has published three volumes of notebooks in the *Centenary Edition: The American Notebooks, The English Notebooks, and The French and Italian Notebooks*. OUP has also published his letters in six volumes. All parenthetical references to Hawthorne's works refer to this edition.

<sup>2</sup> JULIAN HAWTHORNE, *Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife*, vol. I, p. 151.

<sup>3</sup> Letter from Sophia Peabody to her sister Elizabeth written in 1838, between April 26 and May 1st. Quoted from JULIAN HAWTHORNE, *Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife*, p. 185.

sence of suspicion in this instance is in accordance with her reputed naiveté. In fact it has been suggested that one of the reasons Hawthorne fell in love with and married Sophia was her lifelong status as a childlike woman who, on account of her recurrent neuralgia, had always lived at home protected from the «evil» influences of the outside world. It was because of her childlike nature that she believed herself unfit for marriage, and her own son Julian thought that it was her innocence and simplicity that «kept her a child all her life long.»<sup>4</sup> Hawthorne, not deeming himself fit for marriage, could sympathise with these feelings; at Bowdoin he had made a bet that he would not marry until he was 36 years of age. Also, paralleling Sophia, he considered that his own seclusion of twelve years at the Manning residence in Salem had kept his heart pure and childlike.<sup>5</sup>

However, long before he met Sophia, Hawthorne had betrayed his fondness for little girls. In 1835 he wrote in his private notes the following observation: «Three little girls, from six to nine, were sitting on the stones in which the fountain is set, and paddling in the water. It was a pretty picture, and would have been prettier, if they had shown bare little legs, instead of pantalets».<sup>6</sup> Little girls' legs certainly appealed to, and were invariably noticed by, Hawthorne. For years entries in his notebooks alluding to the legs of either his first born or other children recurred. For instance he wrote: «Una is performing gymnastics by tumbling over a chair, thereby discovering much length of leg».<sup>7</sup> However it was not until 1985 when a commentator finally called attention to Hawthorne's «fascination with pure little girls».<sup>8</sup>

Hawthorne's perplexing attitude towards his daughter might have been related to his ambiguous feelings for little girls. That Hawthorne was not wholly conscious of the nature of these feelings seems beyond doubt, but the following comment is particularly telling, and has been often quoted to exemplify his uneasiness over Una.

The children have been playing ball together; and Una, heated by the violence with which she plays, sits down on the floor, and complains grievously of warmth- opens her breast. This is the physical manifestation of the evil spirit that struggles for the mastery of

<sup>4</sup> JULIAN HAWTHORNE, *Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife*, p. 48.

<sup>5</sup> See NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE, *The Letters 1813-1843*, p. 495.

<sup>6</sup> NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE, *The American Notebooks*, p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE, *The American Notebooks*, p. 415.

<sup>8</sup> POLLY L. WHITNEY, «What Does Grandfather Care About Domesticity, and Who Does He Think He Is Anyway?», p. 65.

her; he is not a spirit at all, but an earthly monster, who lays his grasp on her spinal marrow, her brain, and other parts of her body that lie in closest contiguity to her soul; so that the soul has the discredit of these evil deeds.<sup>9</sup>

This uncalled-for response to his daughter's partial nudity betrays the existence of apprehensions. When Hawthorne wrote this passage Una was around five years old (Annie's age), and she is unaccountably accused of possessing an evil spirit simply because, after hard play, she unfastens her robe to cool herself. We must recall here that in Hawthorne's literature sexuality is customarily related to feelings of disgust. Nina Baym has pointed out that in some of his works «it is impossible to distinguish revulsion from attraction, for exactly to the extent that these men are obsessed, possessed, with the woman's body they are revolted by it.»<sup>10</sup>

Hawthorne's ambivalent feelings towards sexuality, as well as the possibility that this ambivalence may have had its source in the incestuous overtones he felt in certain situations, has been discussed before. Brother-sister incest has been long and clearly identified in such works as «Alice Doane's Appeal» or *Dr. Grimshawe's Secret*. Moreover, Melville's *Pierre*, said to have been written under the influence and inspiration of Hawthorne, also portrays a validated case of incest.<sup>11</sup> There existed a personal reason why ideas of incest must have had some bearing on the shaping of Hawthorne's obsessions. The maternal side of his family had played the central role in a sexual scandal taken to court. Nathaniel's ancestor, Nicholas Manning, was accused by a maid of having intercourse with his two sisters. Gloria C. Erlich furnishes a psychobiographical explanation of Hawthorne's treatment of sexuality which supports the incest argument. According to Erlich, Hawthorne's fiction portrays countless variations of the sexually tempting but taboo woman and many of them occur within a context of brother-sister incest.<sup>12</sup> She believes Hawthorne's relationship with his sister Ebe is the most likely source for the recurrent theme. Philip Young also argues that it looks as if something happened between Nathaniel Hawthorne and Ebe.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup> *The American Notebooks*, pp. 420-421.

<sup>10</sup> NINA BAYM, «Thwarted Nature: Hawthorne as Feminist», p. 139.

<sup>11</sup> The significance of *Pierre* in relation to Hawthorne is enhanced by a comment Melville made to Julian many years after Nathaniel's death. Melville was «convinced that Hawthorne had all his life concealed some great secret, which would, were it known, explain all the mysteries in his career». Quoted from *Hawthorne's Secret*, p. 99.

<sup>12</sup> GLORIA C. ERLICH, *Family Themes and Hawthorne's Fiction*, p. 93.

<sup>13</sup> See PHILIP YOUNG, *Hawthorne's Secret*.

Other commentators have paid attention to dark literary connections in the context of father-daughter incest, arguing that «Rappaccini's Daughter», *The Blithedale Romance*, *The Marble Faun* and others include examples of this. T. Walter Herbert argues that Hawthorne gave Una repeated indications of his revulsion «at her taking pleasure in her own body, especially when this aroused him sexually.»<sup>14</sup> In view of the above many of his fictional associations between beautiful female children and male adults should be re-explained and re-evaluated. It is undeniable that Hawthorne felt uncomfortable about his own feelings for his daughter. However, it is possible that much of his discomfort may have had its source in the effect that Una's birth had in displacing the author from the centre of Sophia's attentions. At any rate such relationships deserve a much deeper study than has heretofore been done.

A literary association which poses pertinent questions is that between king Gustavus of Sweden and his daughter Christina in the last sketch of *Biographical Stories*, «Queen Christina». Here little Christina, not being beautiful, obedient, or feminine, does not conform to the nineteenth-century canon of what little girls ought to be, and does not comply with cultural gender restrictions either; therefore she is punished and dies unloved. Christina's relationship with her father is a bizarre one. She is portrayed as being in overt competition with her uncaring mother for the king's love and she finally manages to displace her. Laura Laffrado comments that the little girl is characterised as a surrogate wife for king Gustavus, and that her dancing, the only feminine accomplishment she possesses, is somewhat tainted in that it exemplifies in the tale world the enactment of the girl's inappropriate relationship with her father.<sup>15</sup>

This poses shocking suggestions, but William Wasserstrom went even further in his analysis of «The Golden Touch». He considers the action of this children's story to be motivated at root by king Midas' sexual attraction to his little daughter Marygold. According to Wasserstrom his attraction is deflected and sublimated into an extravagant craving to provide wealth for her.<sup>16</sup> Indeed Midas' obsession with gold is closely associated to his love for Marygold and we are told that «the more Midas loved his daughter, the more did he desire and seek for wealth.»<sup>17</sup> In our opinion, solid textual evidence justifying Wasserstrom's interpretation is not so readily available, but it must be remembered that, as has been aptly observed, nineteenth century stories with child characters

<sup>14</sup> T. WALTER HERBERT, *Dearest Beloved: The Hawthornes and the Making of the Middle-Class Family*, p. 223.

<sup>15</sup> See LAURA LAFFRADO, *Hawthorne's Literature for Children* p. 57.

<sup>16</sup> See WILLIAM WASSERSTROM, «The Spirit of Myrrha».

<sup>17</sup> NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE, *A Wonderbook and Tanglewood Tales*, p. 62

did not express eroticism overtly, but «Usually it is a quietly implied, repressed, incestuous eroticism between a father, or father surrogate, and his daughter».<sup>18</sup>

In *Fanshawe*, Hawthorne's first novel, we will briefly mention two different associations pertinent to this theme of strange unbalanced couples. Doctor Melmoth, biologically childless, becomes exceptionally fond of his new ward Ellen, a girl nearing womanhood with whose care he had been recently entrusted by an old friend. It is Mrs. Melmoth, the doctor's wife, who first realises that the girl has come to occupy a position of importance in her husband's affections. Ellen forms a second association with the villain Butler. He is a self-styled envoy of her father, meant also to be in charge of her and her welfare and therefore a surrogate parent. This substitute parent abducts the girl with the implied intention of raping and marrying her. Meanwhile, through all of this, she is portrayed as a childlike character.

It seems that outside the sphere of his creative work, thoughts of father daughter incest may have visited our author's mind. This conjecture is informed by his lifelong interest in Guido's portrait of Beatrice Cenci which, among mid nineteenth-century American intellectuals, was an icon of perversion evoking Francesco Cenci's rape of his daughter Beatrice. Even Julian Hawthorne alludes to his father's admiration for the picture.<sup>19</sup> For Herbert «Beatrice's portrait provided a focal point for questions of incest and patricide inherent in middle-class family relations and very much alive in the Hawthorne household.»<sup>20</sup>

Returning to Hawthorne's literature, one of the most interesting of his unheeded tales pertaining to his bent for children is «Little Annie's Ramble». Its contemporary reviews were almost universally favourable, possibly because they did not go beneath its pleasant surface. For Longfellow and Elizabeth Peabody the tale was not only soothing and original, but invariably beautiful; and there were some other laudatory commentaries.<sup>21</sup> However, it was only the alert Edgar Allan Poe who aptly detected and casually alluded to «a strong undercurrent of suggestion» running continuously «beneath the upper stream of the tranquil thesis».<sup>22</sup> Poe was right and we believe that this «undercurrent» runs deep in several other early stories as well.

In our century, also, this sketch has achieved a cursory judgement of being innocent. One of Hawthorne's most celebrated modern biographers, James R. Mellow, included it among the «pleasant and sometimes innocuous descriptive

<sup>18</sup> ANNE TROPP TRENSKY, «The Saintly Child in Nineteenth Century American Fiction» p. 410.

<sup>19</sup> JULIAN HAWTHORNE, *Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife*, pp. 142-143.

<sup>20</sup> T. WALTER HERBERT, *Dearest Beloved*, p. 221.

<sup>21</sup> See ALBERT J. VON FRANK, *Critical Essays on Hawthorne's Short Stories*, pp. 24, 27, and 33.

<sup>22</sup> Quoted from AGNES MCNEILL DONOHUE ed. *A Casebook on the Hawthorne Question*, p. 247.

sketches» and David S. Reynolds believes that the story is about the beneficial influence of an angelic child upon an old man.<sup>23</sup> At any rate this imputed thematic innocence led to its traditional classification as children's literature. Roy Harvey Pearce, one of the editors of *The Centenary Edition*, categorised it thus.<sup>24</sup>

But it is our contention that this story deserves none of that veiled condescension. Its long neglect is the consequence of superficial readings. Mary M. Van Tassel probably identified the problem when she observed that the story line is slight and «may not appeal to readers who do not share the nineteenth-century reverence for the child as an embodiment or symbol of moral force.»<sup>25</sup> Indeed, whether analysed by using intrinsic or extrinsic approaches, indications are found that, in spite of the apparent innocence of the superficial narrative thread, its content lends itself to more disturbing interpretations. The reader is asked to follow the narrator and a pretty female child on their rambles around a village (possibly Salem) on a day when a circus is visiting the town. The stroll affords the narrator opportunity to present a sequence of associative images and incidents, and to provide the tale with the vision of what is contemplated by both ramblers, but focused through the man's eyes and spoken through his voice. Thus, as good women and good little girls in the territory of Hawthorne's fiction usually do, Annie ends up silenced. It is her companion who takes it upon himself to voice «her views». And there is more to find upon closer reading.

The ramble, so casually judged as innocent, is one in which a pure little girl is led away from her safe home by a male adult. Both characters walk among such wild animals as the bear, the lion, and the wolf, but the only shade of fear Annie shows while moving among these wild beasts is that caused by the monkeys, whose ugliness affects her greatly because it resembles humanity.<sup>26</sup> This same idea would reappear years later in Hawthorne's notebooks; he explains how his daughter Una was also scared in a similar way.<sup>27</sup> In the pages of this sketch Hawthorne actively suggests that man is the enemy of Annie, and therefore of childhood.

---

<sup>23</sup> JAMES R. MELLOW, *Nathaniel Hawthorne in His Times*, p. 77; David Reynolds, *Beneath the American Renaissance*, p. 362.

<sup>24</sup> ROY HARVEY PEARCE in «Historical Introduction: *True Stories, A Wonderbook, Tanglewood Tales*» pp. 287-8.; LAURA LAFFRADO, *Hawthorne's Literature for Children* p. 13.

<sup>25</sup> MARY M. VAN TASSEL, «Hawthorne, His Narrator, and His Readers in "Little Annie's Ramble"», p. 171.

<sup>26</sup> Annie is scared by the monkey because «it bears a wild and dark resemblance to humanity». See *Twice-Told Tales*, p. 153.

<sup>27</sup> NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE, *The American Notebooks*, p. 271.

More serious intimations of potential harm are found in the text. In this ramble, according to the narrator himself, her purity has been risked. Annie's companion deems it necessary to caution her not to forget to thank heaven that, after wandering into the world, «[she] may return at the first summons, with an untainted and unwary heart,» (Hawthorne, 1974: 129). Can it be reasonably doubted that Annie has been exposed to serious danger? Moreover, the fact that the little girl is favourably compared to young ladies, and that she plays the role of one, seems to hint at a specific kind of hazard, which supports the conjecture that the so called «ramble» resembles in fact an «abduction». Annie's companion overtly remarks: «there are few grown ladies that could entice me from the side of little Annie, for I delight to let my mind go hand in hand with the mind of a sinless child.» (Hawthorne, 1974: 122). In recognising the nature of the perils Annie was spared, one should bear in mind that the stereotypical idea of a puritanical New England does not include all the realities of that time. Perverse sexuality in disguised shapes was common in the literature of the thirties and, though we do not propound that Annie's companion had the slightest mind to molest her *de facto*, the dark nature of the danger in his mind which Annie thankfully escapes is such that he does not dare to specify it.

Abductions interested Hawthorne as literary material. A few years after the composition of «Little Annie's Ramble» he chose two myths portraying abductions and adapted them for children's literature. He was well aware that those «old legends» were «brimming over with everything that is most abhorrent to our Christianized moral sense—». <sup>28</sup> Proserpina and Europa, two young female victims of abduction are metamorphosed into beautiful little girls. Proserpina's abductor happens to be a lonely bachelor, and his only justification for the abduction is that he hoped Proserpina would take him «for a playmate». <sup>29</sup> Hawthorne also had children for playmates. Julian wrote in 1883 that he and his siblings could not «remember when their father was not their playmate, or when they ever desired or imagined any other playmate than he.» <sup>30</sup> Hawthorne's explicit design was to desexualise the stories, but it is obvious that the anomalous relationships resulting from the transformations, as Nina Baym put it, create a new set of problems. <sup>31</sup> It is important to note that some other deviations from the original myth also added to the story's implied sexuality. For instance, the pomegranate that Proserpina eats in the traditional myth is repla-

<sup>28</sup> Introductory to *Tanglewood Tales*, NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE, *A Wonderbook and Tanglewood Tales*, pp. 178-179.

<sup>29</sup> NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE, *A Wonderbook and Tanglewood Tales*, p. 326.

<sup>30</sup> JULIAN HAWTHORNE, *Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife* vol. 1, p. 397.

<sup>31</sup> See NINA BAYM, «Hawthorne's Myths for Children: the Author Versus His Audience», p. 45.



ced by six seeds in Hawthorne's version; for the twentieth-century informed reader this alteration introduces the idea of procreation.

Traumatic abductions in Hawthorne serve as a tempering experience which allows little girls to harden and survive. On the theme of innocence versus experience he led an uninterrupted struggle with himself as to how crucial the latter is for survival. What could our author do with those children unlucky enough to lose their innocence? For years, while still a bachelor, Hawthorne believed that innocence had to be preserved at all cost. A result of this belief are characters such as Ibrahim, who must die because he has been polluted by his experience of evil. Fittingly, Annie is permitted to survive because her intended initiation never takes place, and she can answer her mother's call with an «untainted heart». In contrast to the philosophy used in creating these early characters, after his first child was born, Hawthorne completely reversed his position; he was then capable of envisioning and creating child characters who could survive precisely because of their experience. The author began musing on the necessity of experience after realising his own children's vulnerability. About Julian he wrote: «Julian has too much tenderness, love, and sensibility in his nature; he needs to be hardened and tempered. I would not take a particle of the love out of him; but methinks it is highly desirable that some sterner quality should be interfused throughout the softness of his heart».<sup>32</sup> Experience had become necessary for the survival of children.

To return to Annie it must also be imparted that the narrator pointedly makes use of an excuse in attempting to justify the abduction. The little girl is, in his eyes, only too desirous of being taken away. When he first sees her and entertains the idea of their ramble, he immediately acquaints the reader with her ennui, explaining: «I can see that the pretty child is weary of this wide and pleasant street,» (Hawthorne, 1974: 121). He presumes, on grounds not explained, that she is anxious and waiting to live the experience that the ramble symbolises. At this point it is crucial to bear in mind that a common justification of male violence and rape in the nineteenth century was the assumption that the victimised female had given overt evidence of wanting and accepting the male's advances. In the narrator's opinion Annie, though pure and uncontaminated, is giving signs of being in search of adventure, thus supplying the needed justification. As in Gothic romance, the woman's innocence is a staple, a condition *sine qua non* for seduction to deliver its excitement. There is no pleasure in seducing and corrupting a female unless she is, like Annie, transcendently pure to begin with.

---

<sup>32</sup> NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE, *The American Notebooks*, pp. 424-5.

In trying to prove Annie's willingness to accompany him, her companion betrays his enthrallment of her. Immediately after making up his mind to take her with him he remarks: «Little Annie shall take a ramble with me! I do but hold out my hand, and, like some bright bird in the sunny air, with her blue silk frock fluttering upwards from her white pantalets, she comes bounding on tip-toe across the street» (Hawthorne, 1974: 121). It is crucial at this point to clearly understand that it is not the narrator who joins her in her rambles, as he and Melinda Ponder would have it.<sup>33</sup> On the contrary, Annie is allured, possibly mesmerised, to accompany him in a ramble of his design which gratifies his desires and is meant for his own benefit. He boastfully underlines that a slight motion is enough to persuade the girl to follow him. Given the nebulous conditions in which the ramble is initiated it is indeed appropriate for us to wonder about some aspects that unfortunately cannot be completely elucidated. Who exactly is the narrator? What exactly is his relationship to Annie? Why aren't the parents consulted? Whence comes his authority over the girl? Is Annie's obedience the result of mesmerism?<sup>34</sup> Whatever interpretation we give there is no textual evidence *per se* of Annie's longings to leave her home, except that interpreted by her companion.

Of all these queries perhaps the easiest one to answer is that of the narrator's identity. Annie's companion/abductor is Hawthorne himself. Aside from the fact that within the tale he unequivocally calls attention to his identity as a writer, his contemporaries took this fact for granted on account of one of the author's identifying marks, his smile. Annie is admittedly charmed by the narrator's smile, and that is precisely the reputation Hawthorne had among family and friends. Also, Sketches in the nineteenth century were often presented by a narrator who was assumed by the readers to be the author himself. For instance, Robert Cantwell believed that «“Little Annie's Ramble” is a story of Hawthorne and Anne Marion Forrester, the child of Charlotte Story and John Forrester.» (Cantwell, 1948: 137). All this consensus seems to settle the matter.

The narrator admits that on taking the girl away from her mother without previous permission he is knowingly guilty of negligence. The real issue is what urges him to do that and what justification, if any, he has to act in such fashion. He does not seem to be sorry, though he knows, through the town crier, that Annie's mother is «in despair». In fact none of the abductors, or

<sup>33</sup> See MELINDA PONDER, *Hawthorne's Early Narrative Art*, p. 195.

<sup>34</sup> It is important to recall that Hawthorne was fascinated by the theme of the domination of one human being by another. He treats this theme in *The Blithedale Romance*, «Ethan Brand» and *The Scarlet Letter* among others. In all of them mesmerism was often the way in which the domination was effected.

would-be abductors, repent of their deeds. Moreover, as is the case of the angler in *Fanshawe*, abductors are openly defiant. Since the theme of adult abuse of children had already been introduced in that first novel the possibility that Hawthorne's *doppelgänger*, embodied in the narrator, is endangering Annie may be considered. Her companion takes Annie with him in order to satisfy some personal design. He believes that «After drinking from those fountains of still fresh existence,» he can return into the world «with a kinder and purer heart and a spirit more lightly wise.» (Hawthorne, 1974: 129).

If one believes, like William Faulkner did, that a book is its author's secret life, it is no wonder that Hawthorne's interest in beautiful prepubescent female children should blend with that of his male characters. We therefore conclude that the many associations between mature adult males and immature female little girls depicted by Hawthorne respond to the author's fascination for the latter. This fascination revolves around ambiguous, not wholly identified longings, and finally crystallises in a literature rich in «beautiful little girls», childlike beautiful women, and dominating older male characters imbued with fear and revulsion towards normal sexual relations.

But it must be clearly understood that Hawthorne's yearnings in this respect were imprisoned in the mind's world, and that only there can we look for the consequences. The author often mused on the dilemma of whether the mere thought of committing a sin stains the soul of the thinker or not. In his story «Fancy's Show Box» the narrator wonders whether one can sin: «In the solitude of a midnight chamber,» where «the soul may pollute itself even with those crimes which we are accustomed to be altogether carnal.»<sup>35</sup> This and other stories substantiate that he was wont to have such thoughts, the enactment of which he considered not only a sin, but a polluting sin. As is characteristic with Hawthorne little can be conclusively stated. The interplay of relationships in his universe is never tangible, and events, relationships, etc. take place in a dreamy unreal atmosphere. Guilt is seldom reified.

#### WORKS CITED

- BAYM, NINA (1973): «Hawthorne's Myths for Children: the Author Versus His Audience», *Studies in Short Fiction*, 10, pp. 35-46.
- BAYM, NINA (1993): «Thwarted Nature: Hawthorne as Feminist», *Nathaniel Hawthorne: A Study of the Short Fiction*, New York, Twayne Publishers.

<sup>35</sup> NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE, *Twice-Told Tales*, p. 220.

- CANTWELL, ROBERT (1948): *Nathaniel Hawthorne: The American Years*, New York, Rinehart & Company.
- DONOHUE, AGNES MCNEILL, ed. (1963): *A Casebook on the Hawthorne Question.*, New York, Thomas Y. Cromwell.
- ERLICH, CHASSON GLORIA (1984): *Family Themes and Hawthorne's Fiction: The Tenacious Web*, New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press.
- HAWTHORNE, JULIAN (1885): *Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife*, Boston, James R. Osgood and Company.
- HAWTHORNE, NATHANIEL (1972): *The American Notebooks. The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, vol. VIII, Columbus, Ohio: OUP.
- HAWTHORNE, NATHANIEL (1971): *The Blithedale Romance and Fanshawe. The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, vol. III. Columbus, Ohio, OUP.
- HAWTHORNE, NATHANIEL (1972): *A Wonderbook and Tanglewood Tales. The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, vol. VII. Columbus, Ohio, OUP.
- HAWTHORNE, NATHANIEL (1974): *Twice-Told Tales. The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, vol. IX. Columbus, Ohio, OUP.
- HAWTHORNE, NATHANIEL (1984): *The Letters 1813-1843. The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, vol. XV. Columbus, Ohio, OUP.
- HERBERT, T. WALTER (1992): *Dearest Beloved: The Hawthornes and the Making of the Middle-Class Family*, Berkeley, University of California Press.
- HERBERT, T. WALTER JR. (1989): «Divine Childhood in the Hawthorne Household», *Essex Institute Historical Collection*, 125, pp. 45-54.
- LAFFRADO, LAURA (1992): *Hawthorne's Literature for Children*, Athens and London, The University of Georgia Press.
- LATHROP, ROSE HAWTHORNE (1897): *Memories of Hawthorne*, Boston and New York, Houghton Mifflin Company.
- LOGGINGS, VERNON (1951): *The Hawthornes: The Story of Seven Generations of an American Family*, New York, Columbia University Press.
- MELLOW, JAMES R. (1980): *Nathaniel Hawthorne in His Times*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- PEARCE, ROY HARVEY (1972): «Introduction to *True Stories from History and Biography*», *The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, Columbus, Ohio, OUP.
- PONDER MELINDA (1990): *Hawthorne's Early Narrative Art*, Lewiston, E. Mellen Press.
- REYNOLDS, DAVID (1989): *Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press.
- TRENSKY, ANNE TROPP (1990): «The Sainly Child in Nineteenth-Century American Fiction» *Studies in Short Fiction*, 27. 4, pp. 389-413.

- 
- VAN TASSEL, MARY M. (1987): «Hawthorne, His Narrator, and His Readers in "Little Annie's Ramble"» *ESQ*, 33, pp. 168-181.
- VON FRANK, ALBERT J. (1991): *Critical Essays on American Literature*, Boston, G.K. Hall & Co.
- WASSERSTROM, WILLIAM (1956): «The Spirit of Myrrha», *The American Imago*, vol. XIII, pp. 466-467.
- WHITNEY, L. POLLY (1985): «What Does Grandfather Care About Domesticity, and Who Does He Think He Is Anyway?» *MSE*, 10, pp. 65-67.
- YOUNG, PHILIP (1984): *Hawthorne's Secret: An Untold Tale*, Boston, David Godine.