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Sommario/riassunto	Images of orphanhood have pervaded American fiction since the colonial period. Common in British literature, the orphan figure in American texts serves a unique cultural purpose, representing marginalized racial, ethnic, and religious groups that have been scapegoated by the dominant culture. Among these groups are the Native Americans, the African Americans, immigrants, and Catholics. In keeping with their ideological function, images of orphanhood occur within the context of family metaphors in which children represent

those who belong to the family, or the dominant culture, and orphans  
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