Hawthorne's doctors a study of the technical achievement of complex sympathies.

Mary Sauter Comfort

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HAWTHORNE'S DOCTORS
A STUDY OF THE TECHNICAL ACHIEVEMENT
OF COMPLEX SYMPATHIES

by
MARY SAUTER COMFORT

A Thesis
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Professor in Charge

Chairman of Department
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Limited Views of Hawthorne's Physicians</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. The Quack's Mistake</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. The Illusion of Dr. Heidegger</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. A Reconsideration of &quot;The Birth-Mark&quot;</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. The Personal Dilemma of Giacomo Rappaccini</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vita</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Abstract

To determine Hawthorne's sympathies toward the character of physicians, this study considers the techniques by which he offers alternatives to the prevalent judgments against the physicians. In the "Haunted Quack," the protagonist asserts his own guilt; Hawthorne's focus on similarities between the quack and his associates diffuses the guilt and qualifies the quack's self-condemnation. In "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment," the credulous narrator who would vilify the doctor inadvertently reveals Heidegger's skillful use of prisms, a discovery which further suggests Heidegger's insights into the nature of his patients. In "The Birth-mark," the detractors seem incapable of appreciating the struggles which test and strengthen Aylmer and Georgiana. By emphasizing the limited understanding of those who judge Aylmer, Hawthorne invites sympathy for the doctor's character. And, in "Rappaccini's Daughter," the chorus of detractors loses narrative credibility as coincidences illustrate Giacomo Rappaccini's struggle. As the motives of the critics of Rappaccini become clearer, sympathies for Rappaccini become obvious. By opposing the prevalent narrative judgment against the physicians, then, Hawthorne invites not only appreciation of talents but sympathy for the torments of those vilified characters.
Chapter I
Limited Views of Hawthorne's Physicians

Critics distill caricatures from Hawthorne's characters. In his notebooks, Hawthorne records instances of isolated activity and of interaction; in his stories he expands, combines, and embellishes entries to create characters. Although attracted initially by such embellishments, critics discard these fictional elements in an attempt to reduce the creation to an essential trait; assuming that this trait initially attracted Hawthorne's attention, critics assign a judgment to the refined caricature. The body of criticism which results from this process appends Hawthorne's journal entries like a moral commentary on various demons and gentler spirits.

This process of character reduction and commentary occurs in Taylor Stoehr's *Hawthorne's Mad Scientists*. Stoehr offers as a source for Hawthorne's "The Birth-mark" a journal entry. It describes:

a young man of great talents and profound knowledge of chemistry, who had in view some new discovery of importance. In order to put his mind into the highest possible activity, he shut himself up, for several successive days, and used various methods of excitement ... as a result of which he was seized with a fit of frenzy, which terminated in mania.
The obsessive tendency certainly becomes a part of the character of Aylmer in "The Birthmark," and Stoehr summarizes the fate of an obsessive scientist whose career destroys his personal life: "The solitary researches of genius unfit the scientist for human companionship, so that he is doomed to destroy the very persons whom he intends his work to benefit." In judging Aylmer's character by the death of his wife, Stoehr suggests that Hawthorne's concern is identical with Stoehr's own: "the ultimate alienation of the 'mad scientist.'" But Hawthorne's scientist is not merely a representative of the type of frenzied intellectual hermit. Aylmer relates to his professional peers and enjoys a wide range of emotional responses in companionship with his wife. Thus, though Hawthorne has considered the complexity of Aylmer's character, Stoehr simplifies the portrait, dismissing evidence of character complexity.

This evidence, however, destroyed in the process of character reduction, illustrates Hawthorne's attitude toward his characters. Thus, a study of the narrative techniques often considered superfluous to the stories will provide views contrary to the prevalent critical attitudes of the narrators, the other characters, and the critics who judge Hawthorne's characters. This study considers the

stuff by which critically reduced simulacrum of character can be padded into fuller human dimensions. The special focus of this study is the character of the physicians who, since they almost invite condemnation as unsocial and dangerous powers over a relatively ignorant and vulnerable society, frequently receive only subtle commendation. Commentary on Hawthorne's physicians, therefore, usually accepts the more directly expressed villain-victim dichotomy offered by the characters and narrators. In addition to the judgments of these spokespersons, however, Hawthorne offers, through various narrative techniques, alternative views to counter the prevalent judgments against physicians. Scrutiny of these alternative views proves Hawthorne's vision much broader than that of the detractors he portrays.

Attention to the views of these detractors has convinced critics of the depth of Hawthorne's vision: critical recognition of his special perception of isolation abounds. Chester E. Eisinger compares Hawthorne's "sympathetic portrayal of balanced characters and his less sympathetic picturing of abnormally isolated or ambitious ones." In preferring society, says Eisinger, Hawthorne posits excess and isolation as alternatives, though not necessarily as evil alternatives, to moderation and con-
formity. While Eisinger considers Hawthorne's treatment of isolation as a psychological or social condition, Joel Porte considers the historical context which might have prompted Hawthorne's attention to the condition. Porte considers Hawthorne's portrayal of the solitary individual as a study of the American hero: "Unsupported by the traditional social, political, and theological arrangements and explanations of the Old World, the American hero is by very definition 'in the wilderness'... He is free—indeed, compelled—to confront in solitude the ultimates of the universe and his own soul." Although some critics find Hawthorne's attitude less sympathetic toward isolated characters, then, most note his focus on separateness and solitude.

Critics who submit that Hawthorne portrays such characters to illustrate psychological abnormality of isolation, however, ignore the motives of the detractors who judge those isolated characters. The very identification of a protagonist as solitary or singular suggests variation from norms. Hawthorne's narrators and characters suspect protagonists whose intellectual or physical withdrawal from society could threaten not only their own sanity but also that of society itself; then these protagonists emerge from sequestration to observe,

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to judge, and perhaps to change society. When the same narrator judges the interactions of the emergent character, the judgment is likely to verify the earlier suspicions. For example, Rappaccini's rival, Pietro Baglioni, expects evil from Rappaccini and gloats in his rightness as he judges the final scene. Robert Shulman suggests that Hawthorne's personal preference for an isolated life conflicted with popular acceptance of more social interaction. In his "Hawthorne's Quiet Conflict," (PQ. 1968) Robert Shulman says that Hawthorne's awareness of the attitude became a "devitalizing conflict," which he projected in his protagonists. Whether villainous or devitalized, then, actions of isolated protagonists are judged according to the social disdain proclaimed against such individuals.

Thus, discussions of Hawthorne's portrayal of the conflict between isolation and conformity emphasizes the psychological implications of isolation as they take on moral value. Nina Baym's treatment of a group of Hawthorne's stories reflects this emphasis:

Moralized fictions . . . celebrate the common highway of life and deplore all attempts to step aside from it. . . . The moral truth of these fictions is normative—that is, it assumes that the way most men and women do live is the way all men and women ought to live. . . . It appears the moral lesson behind all

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this fiction could be reduced to the tautology that he who is not like his fellows is not normal. 5

The dichotomy of social norm and individual madness has been a convenient apparatus on which to construct Hawthorne's system of psychology and morality.

Critical approaches with this predilection focus on confrontation as a thematic center: a dangerously crazed, isolated villain reenters society to destroy, via art or science, an innocent who represents that society. Totally unprepared for the diabolical experiments and creative efforts of these meddling hermits, the social person suffers either loss of individuality or physical destruction. The medical profession provides rich opportunities for portrayal of these catastrophic interactions. Living in mysterious seclusion while studying and concocting cures, the physician finally emerges, fictionalized to monstrous proportions by rumors and legend, to test the efficacy of those cures on innocent patients. Baym notes that in his earliest characterization of doctors: "[Their] search for the elixir is an alienating activity that further separates [them] from [their] fellows." 6 Thus, apparently earnest searching for an elixir becomes preparation for villainy, with one's fellows as victims.


6 Baym, p. 259.
Since the doctor inevitably fails to extend life indefinitely, he becomes the herald of death. In "Wakefield," the doctor's visit signals the proximity of Wakefield's wife's death, not the promise of regained health. The characters' distrust of medical science, attributed to Hawthorne, is blamed on the scientist's psychological imbalance. Henry Fairbanks explains: "Not his science which is estimable, but his insane zeal for science, works ill for mankind... Hawthorne was not indicting science per se. He was deprecating a science which deified and dehumanized at the same time." Whether for the pride or ambition which precedes fanaticism, or for the isolation which results from it, Hawthorne's physicians appear blame-worthy. They represent the imbalance which characterizes scientists and upsets society.

So often does Hawthorne portray the vilified scientist that critics have searched his notebooks and biographies for evidence that the perception is based on personal experience. They argue that Hawthorne must have experienced isolation and suffered the judgment isolation evokes from society. Taylor Stoehr makes this association in his observation of the physicians who, like artists,


"spy" on their fellows. In this stance, the physicians resemble authors who observe characters. Stoehr concludes that doctors represent "a facet of Hawthorne's authorial consciousness." He finds in all Hawthorne's doctors "author surrogates ... projections of [Hawthorne's] own pervasive artist-guilt." As an instance of this projection, Stoehr quotes Dr. Dolliver, an Hawthorne character who explains the cause of his own disturbing practice. Dolliver finds himself "manipulating others as a novelist controls his characters and their interactions." He offers that he "finds himself growing to be a devil by force of solitude and long life."\(^9\) Whether the isolated scientist is the typical American hero or the insane artist, Hawthorne's persistent interest and portrayal suggests, if not first-hand knowledge, at least studious documentation of an observed phenomenon.

Critical interest in identifying Hawthorne with the "mad scientist" gives way to denial that these personages are "characters" at all. More or less fascinated by Hawthorne's exploration of obsession and isolation, critics suggest that Hawthorne's special interests precluded full character portrayal. Jac Tharpe discusses this focus:

Hawthorne analyzed and described a world of dissociated maladjusted persons like himself without having much sympathy for them and ... very little development

\(^9\)Stoehr, pp. 116-117.
occurs in Hawthorne's technique of characterization. ... He is more interested in the personality of a ghost than in that of a person. He draws masks on shadows.  

Tharpe's discussion of the concern and the style of Hawthorne suggests a uniquely appropriate unity: a technique which does not develop character is especially suited to an author who does not intend to develop character. Arthur Hobson Quinn considers the style a kind of artistic transcendence:

Hawthorne's work is laid in that abstract moral existence in which the ideals of his imagination fused with the power of their compelling beauty, the incidents of his fancy into those profound truths in whose presence mere facts become impertinent.

But such praise of the extraction of essence implies a hierarchy wherein complexity of character is valued according to its artistic utility. And, while expressing satisfaction with the artist's work, such praise denies the manifestations of character.

This view of the characters as allegorical reinforces the limited view of characters offered by narrators. When


prejudiced or naive narrators fail to grasp character complexity, they portray only those characteristics which they recognize according to their limited perceptions. The reader who accepts that limited portrayal judges Hawthorne as an allegorist and a moralist. Of Poe's similar use of limited narrators, Gargano writes: "Poe often so designs his tales as to show the narrators' limited comprehension of their own problems and states of mind . . . so as to establish a vision of life and character which the narrator's very inadequacies help to prove." Porte explains that Hawthorne's use of the technique enhances sympathy for the very human limitations of the narrator while it obscures our understanding of the characters. Granting the humanity of the narrator, then, threatens to deny the life of the characters as they might exist outside that narration. The limited narrator's sense of importance, his insistence and assertiveness, partially accounts for the tendency to consider Hawthorne's characters as fictions within a fiction. We accept the narrator's fantasy while suspecting that the explanation for his illusion would appear if that narrator would step out of the authorial light.

Forcing this inspired narrator to retreat is particularly difficult in the doctor stories. Prepared with

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12 Joel Porte, p. 9.
historical and local stereotypes which vilify the secluded doctor, the narrator peers into laboratories, gardens, and studies to observe the practitioner; then, identifying with the vulnerable patients, he characterizes the doctor as villain. Consideration of the character of the physician requires constant attention to the limited narrative perspective. The introduction to "Rappaccini's Daughter" promises rewards for this effort: "M. de l'Aubepine's productions . . . if the reader chance to take them in precisely the proper point of view, may amuse the leisure hour as well as those of the brighter man."\textsuperscript{13}

Chance, in fact, will probably support the predominant narrative view. I have already considered the implicit limitations of such a focus. In her Nathaniel Hawthorne: Transcendental Symbolist, Marjorie Elder expresses such a sympathy: "The artist sees himself by means of light," she observes, "and reflects his vision in the mirror by means of light."\textsuperscript{14} Hawthorne's narrators frequently exercise such perspective contortions as they observe the physicians. But the artist sees by means of more pedestrian sensory equipment. Although Hawthorne gives his narrator's every opportunity to obscure character

\textsuperscript{13}Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Rappaccini's Daughter," in Mosses From an Old Manse, ed. William Charvat, et al. (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1974) p. 93.

through prejudice and illuminating props, he simultaneously prepares readers to consider the character because he has been obscured. The reader is free (responsible?), then, to decide where stereotype coincides with personality, where prejudice replaces narrative objectivity.

Having distinguished character from the fantastic attributions of the narrator, the reader can determine the extent of the fantasy. That is, does the coincidence of stereotype with personality guarantee some equally legendary result of that personality type: If the physician really is an isolated character, will the patient die? Acceptance of the narrative expectations requires what Quinn calls an "intellectual surrender." In his *Hawthorne: A Critical Study*, Waggoner calls the reader's responsibility a "leap of intuitive sympathy." But the surrender is due to the author, not the narrator. Such a leap into the mists which the narrator deliberately arranges guarantees limited perspective. A lucid meeting with either physician or patient requires, not willing acceptance of the narrative delusion, but an exploration of the darkness where the two shadows meet. For it is in interaction that Hawthorne's characters insist on their identities.

15 Quinn, p. 141.
16 Quoted by Walter Blair, p. 120.
Doctors, admittedly or reputedly limited in either education or a human emotion, prescribe for and treat their patients in "The Haunted Quack," "Doctor Heidegger's Experiment," "The Birthmark," and "Rappaccini's Daughter." The patients exhibit societal susceptibility to science because of their ignorance, emotional involvement, or innocence of science or scientists. Confrontation, however, reveals in both doctor and patient personalities beyond the limited representational types. In his Preface to *Twice-told Tales* Hawthorne says the sketches "are not the talk of a secluded man . . . but his attempts to open an intercourse with the world."¹⁷ The physicians' motives are almost as innocent.

Chapter II
The Quack's Mistake

Many voices criticize doctors in Hawthorne's fiction. A credulous narrator doubts the achievements of Dr. Heidegger. A fearful wife and a chuckling laboratory assistant question the decisions of Aylmer in "The Birthmark." Rappaccini's own daughter and a professional rival denounce the motives of Dr. Rappaccini. In "The Haunted Quack," the doctor criticizes himself, admits to practicing quack medicine, and confesses the murder of his patient, Granny Gordon.

Jenkins's confession occupies the journey on a canal boat for an attentive traveling companion who later recalls the distraught physician's tale. Jenkins tells the narrator of his desire to escape his "mean occupation" as a cobbler. A lucky coincidence allows Jenkins to inherit the practice of Doctor Ephraim Ramshorne, and accidental skills and insights enable him to flourish in his new profession. His luck finally fails as Granny Gordon, his most dedicated patient, threatens to haunt him for causing her apparently imminent death. In spite of a sojourn to New York City, Jenkins cannot escape Granny's omnipresent
ghost; he boards the canal boat to return to Utica where he resolves to take the punishment for his crime. Jenkins's confession convinces the narrator that the quack has become "a little disordered in his intellect,"¹ and he is as shocked as Jenkins by the welcome the quack receives from the happy villagers. Granny is alive and the citizens welcome their learned doctor, whose absence bode evil for Bill Gordon; Bill had threatened to kill Jenkins if his wife died. The return pleases everyone; the quack bids farewell to his traveling companion and leaps into a wagonload of friendly villagers.

Prior to the forgiving conclusion, however, the quack's own story stresses his guilt. He proclaims his success only as it supports his self-portrait as villain. When he learns his trade, for instance, he is fully aware that the medicines he concocts are useless. His success lies in his claim that his "services became indispensable to his master" (258). Of his own evil intentions, he boasts: "To work I went, with the internal resolve that where Ramshorne had given one dose, I would give six" (259). In response to Granny's supposed death, he remains unrepentant, hoping to resume his "old profession" (263). He summarizes his life in his remarks to the narrator:

"Yes, I am a murderer. In these pallid features, you may read enstamped . . . . Guilt--guilt--guilt" (254). His case is convincing.

The narrator, in fact, requires none of Jenkins's rhetoric. Even before he overhears the quack's somniloquy, he suspects that Jenkins is "either a fugitive from justice, or else a little disordered in mind" (252-3). After the nightmare, the narrator is "convinced that Jenkins was a criminal" (253). His original judgment criticizes Jenkins's habit of "keeping away from the table at meal times, and seeming averse from entering into conversation with the passengers. . . . Jenkins dreads] to meet the gaze of a fellow mortal" (252). This strange behavior, the confession, and the plan to return for punishment combine to evoke the narrator's final judgment: "I plainly saw that he was a little disordered in his intellect" (263). Although the quack's confession provides the details of the crime, the narrator's opinion confirms Jenkins's own verdict--the guilty verdict written on those pallid features.

Granny Gordon needs no such self-condemnation, proof of a troubled conscience, or sickly countenance. Jenkins's confession confirms both the narrator's suspicions and Granny's allegations. But Granny's attack comes as no surprise. Jenkins establishes her case as he develops a villain-victim dichotomy in his practice. In order to succeed in quackery, he "sedulously cultivated . . . . the
good graces . . . of the . . . old ladies in town" (259). For Jenkins, Granny typifies "that species of old women, so frequent in all country towns," who become devotees of doctors; therefore, he makes a "firm friend and ally" of Granny "as the Indians propitiate the favor of the devil" (261). Thus, Granny's exclamation, "You villainous quack you—you have poisoned me, you have," merely signals her sudden recognition of the dichotomy which Jenkins has consistently affirmed (262). The judgments of Granny and the narrator, then, neither qualify nor prove Jenkins's guilt. His own confession establishes his corruptness.

Nor do specific offers of forgiveness reduce the effect of the confession. The narrator offers his consolation to the distraught quack." "If [you] had killed fifty old women, they could do nothing to [you], if [you] had done it professionally" (263). But the consolation focuses on the quack's lack of professionalism and thereby emphasizes his guilt. Nor does the joy of the villagers excuse Jenkins. Their relief that Bill Gordon need not stand trial for Jenkins's death makes them forget the quack's irresponsible flight from Granny's death bed. Thus, their fickle welcome illustrates their ignorance and susceptibility to continued deception. Effectively, the narrator, the quack, and the villagers affirm the dichotomy which proves Jenkins's criminality: even if Granny lives, he is guilty of deliberately victimizing the vulnerable
villagers.

In spite of the consensus against Jenkins, however, Hawthorne suggests a wider range of sympathies. Although he does not portray any character who unreservedly champions the quack, he undercuts Jenkins's self-condemnation by weakening the dichotomies on which the quack builds his case. By focusing on similarities between characters whom Jenkins sets in opposition, Hawthorne mutes the distinctions. Thus, if the simplified relationships which dramatize and support Jenkins's villainy become more complex, the predominant judgment against participants in those relationships must also vary. This study explores Hawthorne's method of suggesting complexity of relationships in an effort to superimpose variants on the prevalent judgment.

"The Haunted Quack" rewards a search for such overlaid points of view because, as an early exercise in conveying multiple sympathies, its techniques are fairly evident. Although the failure to obscure technical apparatus belies authorial sophistication, that very apparatus suggests that even in his earliest tales, Hawthorne refuses to accept dichotomy as a formula for judgment. Granny and Jenkins do not simply exemplify corrupted professional dependence. The narrator and the quack share more than a judge-confessor interaction. And Jenkins is more like the villagers he disdains than the quack he
claims to emulate. Hawthorne demonstrates the complexity of these associations by pointing to similarities between the characters.

Focusing on these telling similarities, Hawthorne duplicates objects, characteristics, or actions. The doubling suggests associations between characters whose dissimilarity, according to Jenkins, is the essence of their relationship. The tale, abounds with doubling; almost every hat, habit, and harangue has its duplicate in another character. But this study considers those examples which pertain to the sympathies due to the quack. First, as doubling shows his complex relationship with Granny, it diminishes his avowed abuse of that woman. Then, as the narrator's foibles resemble Jenkins's weaknesses, objectivity required for judgment becomes less likely. Finally, as the quack resembles the victimized villagers, he appears less deserving of the blame due to Ramshorne.

In diminishing the distinction between Granny and Jenkins, Hawthorne first duplicates their general appearance. The narrator is appalled by Jenkins: "He was tall and thin in person, rather shabbily dressed, with long, lank, black hair, and large gray eyes, which gave a visionary character to one of the most pallid and cadaverous countenances" (252). Then Jenkins tells of his awful patient: "Thin and withered away in person, she
bore no small resemblance to a newly exhumed mummy," and she haunts him appearing "with her grey hairs streaming from beneath an old nightcap" (263). The early association between the doctor and his patient establishes a resemblance which decreases the effect of the quack's assertions of difference in opposition to the quack's insistence on their differences.

Next, the quack's judgment against Granny ironically associates the two characters. Jenkins despises Granny's habit of visiting the sick, telling "long dismal stories," and then leaving "muttering threats and abuse" (261). He apparently forgets, during his own long, dismal story, that his own habit brings him to the homes of the sick. But Hawthorne suggests the association in the narrator's description of the quack's haunted dreams. During his dream he is "muttering" and finally awakens himself by shouting at the ghost: "Begone" I say, you bloody old hag, begone!" (252-3). Instead of reinforcing the quack's distinctions, Hawthorne arranges similarities.

Then, even Jenkins's favorite emblem of uniqueness loses its effect as it associates the quack with his patient. As he embarks on his career, he dons "an old plaid cloak" which is one of "the necessary requisitions for metamorphosis . . . [as a] . . . disciple of Esculapius" (256). But Granny, too, has a cloak, and she wears it to make her rounds: "Wrapped in an old scarlet
cloak—that hideous cloak! . . . she might be seen hovering about the dwelling of the sick" (261). The cloaks provide yet another evidence of similarity.

And, finally, the look-alikes share a restlessness which motivates their actions. Granny "seeks fresh stimulus in scenes of distress" as well as in new, foul tasting medicines. Jenkins's entire career changes when his "whole heart becomes sick of sedentary occupation" (254). Thus, the doubling of seemingly incidental elements focuses on similarities between these characters.

The simple villain-victim distinction is complicated by these implied considerations. In the first place, if Granny and Jenkins look alike, judgments of the appearance of one may accrue as well to the other. Although the narrator first suspects Jenkins's guilt because of his cadaverous appearance, however, no one makes a similar conviction of the mummy-like Granny. In another instance, Jenkins bases much of his self-condemnation on his fraudulent practice of visiting the sick. Granny's visits, by contrast, elicit criticism only as a nuisance, although she is less competent than the quack. Granny, in fact, disturbs the patients with her "ill-boding predictions" (261). Further, while Jenkins indulges in self mockery, as he exaggerates the effect of his own cloak, he fails to respond as lightheartedly to Granny's cloak; his rhetoric betrays a frail sense of importance. Finally,
focusing on shared restlessness suggests that, in addition
to greed for professional success, the relationship is
motivated by Jenkins's craving for intellectual challenge.

In destroying the dichotomy between Jenkins and the
narrator, Hawthorne again begins with a shared effort to
combat boredom. Horrified by the approaching evening of
idleness, the narrator seeks books and conversations when
he fears "the foul fiend Ennui coming upon [him] with all
her horrors" (251). Discontented with his job as a cob-
bler, Jenkins details the pains of his boredom:

my legs grew tired of being trussed
beneath my haunches; my elbows wearied
with their monotonous motion; my eyes
became dim with gazing forever upon
the dull brick wall (254).

Although the subject of their conversation throughout the
journey limits their interaction to an admission and a
judgment, their shared distaste for monotony suggests a
potential for shared sympathies.

In addition, Jenkins and the narrator share a particu-
lar curiosity about their fellows' use of drinks and
medicines. They conjecture about the motives and choices
of the indulging people; the narrator observes that the
passengers have various reasons for their selections:

One called for a glass of hot whiskey
punch, because he felt cold; another
took some brandy toddy to prevent his
taking cold, some took mint julaps, some
gin slings, and some rum and water. One took his dram because he felt sick; another to make him sleep well; and a third because he had nothing else to do. [One] called for a pint of beer to take the vapors out of his head (252).

For his patients, Jenkins adds his own concoctions to those of Ramshorne. "Besides Ramshorne's patent catholicon, and universal panacea, his anti-pertusso-balsamico drops, his patent calorific refrigerating anodyne, and his golden restorative of nature, . . . [he sold] . . . the anthelminthic amalgam . . . and the antiscrofulous abstergent lotion." Jenkins sold his own "Antidote to Death, or the Eternal Elixir of Longevity" (258-259). He considers their desire for the compounds; they want new medicines when the "charm of novelty" wears off, when they "discover the inefficacy of the old nostrums," and, in Granny's case, whenever "it was something new, and had a high-sounding name to recommend it." Foul taste especially appealed to Granny who "would take [his] most nauseous compounds . . . the more disgusting was the dose, the greater in her opinion was its virtue" (261). Each implies that people drug unnecessarily. Their predilection to draw similar conclusions about people accounts, perhaps to a greater extent than their judge-confessor roles, for their mutual condemnation of Jenkins.

More telling of their likeness than their shared observation is their shared impulse to change direction.
Initially, the narrator reverses his plan to go to Niagara, heading, instead toward Utica when he finds the roads "nearly impassable." When he tires of riding, he tries to walk on the muddy tow path, but finally decides to borrow a book to pass the time. Like the narrator, Jenkins makes a series of reversals. When a patient almost boils in a steam bath cure, Jenkins changes his practice; when Granny threatens to die, Jenkins changes his address; when her ghost haunts his dreams, he hastens toward the gallows. These moves are illuminated through the initial focus of the narrator's reversal and humorously punctuated by Jenkins's ostensibly accidental step into the canal. The narrator explains that, "having lost his balance . . . his foot slipping, Jenkins fell backwards into the canal" (263). The detail of the accident associates the two in their lack of firm purpose.

Even their respective educations suffer from a certain limitation because of their capricious approach to learning. Neither bothers to obtain the texts he desires, and each is interrupted in an effort to read. When another traveler leaves his "well thumbed volume" in the cabin of the boat, the narrator borrows that History of Witches. He is "poring half asleep over the pages . . . of wonderful narrations" when Jenkins startles him. As for Jenkins, when Ramshorne leaves him in the library, the apprentice quack "venture[5] to dislodge one of the dusty tomes"
As he begins to "try to puzzle out the hard words," Ramshorne returns and grabs the book away "with a gruff air" (257). Dependent on opportunity and accident, neither achieves the educational background to judge the other.

Thus, doubling signifies complex motives for the friendship between Jenkins and the narrator, and it suggests reconsideration of the verdict against Jenkins. First, a horror of monotony prompts Jenkins to seek amusement in prescribing for Granny; then, the same fear motivates the narrator to attend to the quack's confession. The comparison renders Jenkins' attitude toward his patient less reprehensible; his curiosity simply motivates his dedication to his profession. Second, Jenkins considers himself blameworthy because he uses his insights about their preferences for foul-tasting, well-named compounds. When the narrator's insight proves almost identical, the quack's use of his knowledge seems less incriminating. Then, as the narrator's flimsily motivated reversal recurs in Jenkins' career revisions, the quack's aimlessness suggests adaptability as well as escapism. Finally, since the guiltless narrator "neglects to provide himself with books" (251), Jenkins' brief attempt to study medical volumes seems almost laudable. Through association with the narrator, then, Jenkins' actions require less rationalization; his self-condemnation appears excessive.
Much of his self-condemnation depends on his asserted emulation of Ephraim Ramshorne. Yet, Jenkins has little in common with the "large and robust" mentor whose "ruby visage" distinguishes him from his pallid imitator. In fact, although Jenkins intends to imitate his idol in extorting the spoils of a fraudulent practice, he actually succeeds in imitating Ramshorne's destitute peddler-patient instead. During his earliest perusal of the doctor's office, Hippocrates notices a "ricketty wooden clock which the doctor had taken in part payment from a peddler" (257). During his own sojourn in New York, Jenkins pawn's his watch and some of his clothes. Thus, "reduced to his last shilling" (263), Jenkins resembles the peddler both in his destitution and in his solution to his poverty. Though Jenkins insists that he inherits Ramshorne's sham practice, the doubling technique associates the younger quack with the patients whom Ramshorne fleeces.

Ultimately, then, the technique qualifies Jenkins for a larger share of authorial sympathy. Since the quack's guilt depends on his victimization of Granny, Hawthorne's doubling limits that guilt as it counters dichotomy with similarities. Nevertheless, if the narrator's condemnation supports Jenkins's, the guilty verdict seems appropriate. But Hawthorne's duplications suggest bases for camaraderie which would predispose the narrator to support any assertion by Jenkins—even innocence.
Clearly, then, only his confessed inheritance of the pseudo profession of Ramshorne entitles him to blame. And Hawthorne counters the asserted imitation with Jenkins's professional methods; Jenkins urges moderation and prescribes only those concoctions he has first tested on animals. Thus, though Jenkins fails to distinguish himself as the "beau ideal of a doctor—a very Apollo in the healing art," he similarly fails to distinguish himself as a murderer. Hawthorne foils the latter attempt by identifying Jenkins with both his victim and his judge.

In conclusion, Hawthorne's refusal to identify a villain results from his denial of simple dichotomy. Instead, he signals a broad spectrum of sympathies. Taylor Stoehr recognizes the quack's error: "'The Haunted Quack' imagines himself into his mentor's practice." And Franklin B. Sanborn offers the judgment against the "meanness and triviality of village life" in his attribution of the tale to Hawthorne. While the Stoehr criticism against the quack and the Sanborn judgment of villagers occur in the tale, Hawthorne does not reserve critical sympathy for either the doctor or the villagers.

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Instead, he perceives interaction and motivation which emphasize concerns which are more often artistic than moralistic. Initially, perhaps for narrative clarity, Hawthorne distinguishes characters according to ostensible differences, and his characters emphasize the dichotomy. But Hawthorne doubles elements to deny absolute distinctions. No arbitrary arrangement replaces real complexity in establishing sympathies. And the destruction of dichotomy is not an accident: Hawthorne draws portraits, not conclusions.

He uses quackery to evoke responses from characters. The issue of unscrupulous medical practice provides opportunity to judge not only practitioners but also patients. Oliver Wendell Holmes summarizes the abuse as it is symbiotically perpetuated:

> Whether the world at large will ever be cured of trusting to specifics as a substitute for observing the laws of health, and to mechanical or intellectual formulae as a substitute for character, may admit of question. Quackery and idolatry are all but immortal. ⁴

Hawthorne's dramatization of the mutuality of error superficially maintains the concomitant accusatory tone in this judgment.

But Hawthorne further considers the relationships as they go beyond the professionally dependent and the socially circumscripive. He qualifies both conviction and acquittal. Jenkins is unprepared to achieve an honest medical practice; nor is he inclined to luxuriate in a conscienceless abandonment to the joys of quackery. In spite of his assumed submission to the judgment of the narrator and his asserted disdain for the foibles of the villagers, he shares an entire journey and many sympathies with the narrator and concludes his confession by riding off with those very villagers. By identification with the tale's innocents—the capricious narrator and the meddlesome patient—Jenkins gains a share of the narrator's authority and a portion of the old woman's folksy charm. The effect is to obscure simple condemnation and to attach some sympathy to Jenkins's rather pragmatic morality. In a tale constructed on a confession and judgments, that effect illustrates the artistry of its author.
"Nothing sheds such light on the superstitions of an age as the prevailing interpretation and treatment of disease."¹ And nothing illuminates the achievement of Dr. Heidegger as his utilization of those superstitions in his treatment of his four friends. The contagious credulity of the foursome infects an observant narrator who posits guilt and condescension to explain the doctor's curious study and his aloof superiority. Although the narrator's view convinces critics that the doctor is villainous, his story also provides evidence for a positive interpretation of "that very singular man, old Dr. Heidegger."² The narrative achievement of both a negative and a positive explanation for that singularity demonstrates Hawthorne's

¹Oliver Wendell Holmes, "The Medical Profession in Massachusetts," in his Medical Essays (Boston, Massachusetts, 1891), p. 314.

²Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment," in Twice-told Tales, ed. William Charvat et al. (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1974), p. 227. All further references to this work appear in the text.
awareness of the predominant and alternative attitudes towards the physician.

That predominant attitude, expressed by the narrator, reflects the doubts of the four depressed old people whom Heidegger invites into his study. Seated around a table on which a vase holds a magical liquid, the four are amused by the doctor's demonstration: he tosses a fifty-year-old rose into the water, and it regains its color. Although the demonstration convinces them only of the doctor's ability to deceive them, they agree to drink a glass of the water. When the first swallow results in a change, they request a second and a third drink. The doctor agrees only after warning them to avoid repetition of their past follies as they regain their youth. They promise, and he offers subsequent drinks after alternately hurrying and postponing the quaffing with his comments. In spite of their promise, the group reenacts a "youthful rivalship" for the favors of the woman in the group, the Widow Wycherly (236). And, in their reenactment, their dancing and struggling topples the delicate vase. Retrieving the rose from among the broken glass, Dr. Heidegger signals the wild group to be seated, holds up the fading rose, and announces the end of the experiment. Confused and disappointed by their return to old age, the foursome plan to visit Florida and find the fountain which yields the magic liquid. Dr. Heidegger, however, explains that his experiment has con-
vinced him to avoid such "delirium."

The group's original attribution of magic to the doctor's deception changes during the experiment, and they ultimately believe the liquid is magical. The narrator, on the other hand, maintains a certain doubt. He concludes with recurrent questions: "Was it an illusion? Had the changes of a lifetime been crowded into so brief a space, and were they now four aged people, sitting with their old friend, Dr. Heidegger?" (238) He is convinced, however, of the doctor's unique, perhaps diabolical, powers. In his attempt to understand the apparently magical events, he offers the predominant view of the physician. Initially, he describes the contents of the doctor's study, recounting rumors associated with its furnishing and accessories. Then, he observes the experiment and offers his account of the phenomenon. His account is an effort in objectivity by consensus: he attempts to record the wonderment of the four old friends. Inadvertently, he also provides descriptive similes about the sun which correspond with the doctor's use of sunlight to achieve the desired illusion.

A survey of the critical views of Dr. Heidegger will demonstrate the narrator's success in persuading readers of the doctor's ominous powers. An examination of the description of the study will show the technique by which that persuasion is effected. Then, a review of his observations of the experiment reveals his growing con-
viction of the ominous powers of the doctor and his ac-
cidental references to the doctor's control of light
shining through the prismatic vase. It will be shown
that the narrator's predilection for fantasy is similar
to the predilection of the foursome; and this inclination
becomes invaluable to the perceptive doctor's experiment.

The narrative technique inspires students of the tale
either to expand on the vilification implicit in the
descriptions or to dismiss the doctor's eccentricity as
mildly offensive amusement. William T. Blair considers
the methods by which Dr. Heidegger, as the devil incarnate,
guides his four friends through the deadly sins. 3 Lawrence
Scanlon finds the doctor guilty of murdering his fiance,
Sylvia Ward, whose picture hangs accusingly in the doctor's
study. 4 More typical than these serious condemnations are
those which object to the doctor's scornful demeanor.
Taylor Stoehr associates Heidegger with the other Hawthorne
doctors who, he says, are "all plotters and connivers, at-
ttempting to snare others in their webs of cause and effect."

3William T. Blair, "'Dr. Heidegger's Experiment': An Al-
legory of Sin," in The Nathaniel Hawthorne Journal 1976,

4Lawrence Scanlon, "That Very Singular Man, Dr.
Heidegger," NCF, 17 (1962), 253-263.
Dr. Heidegger, Stoehr specifies, "plays a rather literary trick on his friends, then sits back to watch them in their illusory roles." This premeditated noninvolvement likewise annoys Neal Frank who suggests that although Heidegger is a "not-very-sinister Gothic scientist," he would be, "in Hawthorne's moral scheme . . . not quite guiltless, for the motive of his experiment can be little other than a curiosity about the natures and reactions of his friends." Also convinced by the emphasis of the doctor's dispassionate demeanor are critics who, nevertheless, appreciate the effect of that distance: Nina Baym believes the doctor's "firm, authorial presence" accounts for an impression of decisiveness," in which the "works of delicate fancy are . . . subsumed." And Edith Birkhead describes the same effect in her claim that the scenes are "seen through the medium of an old-fashioned magic lantern." But these positive remarks ultimately give way to dismissal of the tale as unimportant: Baym finds the tale "frankly fantastic and artificial"; Birkhead calls it "a fantastic trifle." The narrator's suspicions inspire


condemnations of Heidegger's character; his surrender to superstition convinces others to discount the tale as unrealistic.

These limited views of Dr. Heidegger arise in part because his achievement is not as great as his stated goal. He implies that he will cause his companions to "grow young again" by using "this admirable fluid"; actually, he only succeeds in convincing them that they have been "restore[d] to the bloom of youth" (231). The discrepancy, however, does not justify total dismissal of the achievement: Dr. Heidegger succeeds in replacing ennui with elan vital. The "gray, decrepit, sapless, miserable creatures, who . . . sat stooping round the doctor's table" when the story begins, are "resolved forthwith to make a pilgrimage" at the end of the experiment (232, 238). Narrative technique which submerges this achievement in the judgments and conjectures about the doctor merits attention.

While many of the suspicions about the doctor's practices derive from comments by the foursome, the narrator's efforts are demonstrably effective in destroying the physician's credibility. The Widow Wycherly considers the doctor's plans "Nonsense," and Colonel Killigrew believes "not a word of the doctor's story" (230-1). Still, they attend to miracles and they compare the doctor's demonstration to the "greater miracles of a conjurer's show"
The narrator, however, does not dismiss the doctor's claims. He offers evidence to suggest that the scientist can, indeed, produce—or, at least, inspire—supernatural occurrences.

In his description of the study, the narrator's technique becomes evident. He uses rumors which focus on the doctor's secluded studies. Echoing the initial wonderment of that excluded and curious public who occasionally glimpses the study, he juxtaposes each fact in the study with a matching fiction. Then, he offers his credulous conclusion. His habit is to gradually cease to qualify the stories and, finally, to state fact and fiction with equanimity.

The description of the study begins with a qualified reference to the atmosphere: "If all stories were true, Dr. Heidegger's study must have been a very curious place" (228). Following his description wherein details are associated with unlikely anecdotes, the narrator concludes: "Such was Dr. Heidegger's study" (emphasis mine) (229). From the very start, he prepares for this assertion. First, he attributes to cobwebs and dust the contradictory purpose of decoration. Although those evidences of the chambermaid's oversight hardly "festoon" and "be-sprinkle" the chamber, the narrator proceeds as if assertion were fact. Of a "bronze bust of Hippocrates," the narrator recalls that "some authorities" claim that
Heidegger consults with the bust for difficult cases. Although a recent description of shelves of scientific volumes betrays the real source of the doctor's information, the fantasy about the bust of Hippocrates stands unqualified. Then, having offered the qualified anecdote that "it was fabled that the spirits of all the doctor's deceased patients dwelt within . . . a looking-glass . . . within a tarnished gilt frame," he proceeds to the unqualified recollection that on one occasion "several ghastly faces had peeped forth from the mirror" (228-9). In like manner, he describes a "full length portrait of a young lady" who "stepped one foot upon the floor." Earlier qualifiers such as "If all stories were true, . . . according to some authorities, . . . [and] it was fabled that . . ." are abandoned as the narrator becomes involved and convinced by his own story. Of a black book he offers no introductory qualifier but simply announces: "It was well known to be a book of magic." The effect of this process is to prepare the reader to accept as history the obvious fantasy attributed to the "brazen head of Hippocrates" which "frowned" on the chambermaid, "and said,—'Forbear!'" Ironically, the description which should convince an audience of the magic of the room does more to indicate the imagination of "some authorities" and the credulity of the narrator (228-9).

The narrator's description of the study, then, involves
a movement from fact to fantasy. Attitude changes from wonder to credulity. The resulting judgment explains Heidegger's singularity as either a villain or an interesting eccentric. The doctor's experiment, however, shows that he utilizes these popular fantasies. In this light, his singularity refers to a talent in understanding not only the spectrum of light but also the scope of human gullibility.

Before he even begins his experiment, Dr. Heidegger capitalizes on the musings of his associates. He chooses as the setting for his experiment the magical chamber which, replete with symbols of science and mystery, promises to arouse the imaginations of his guest/subjects. Since their despondency and skepticism for science makes direct medical cure doubtful, this appeal to their love of fantasy becomes necessary. The chamber is conducive to acceptance of the unlikely results which Heidegger expects.

The description of the study, then, conveys one reason for Heidegger's choice of settings. As the narrator chronicles the experiment, he inadvertently reveals another reason for the doctor's choice.

Each step through the experiment includes the narrator's observations of both the doctor's procedures and the position of the sun. As he tells of the demonstration with the faded rose, he notes the doctor's movements as
independent of the conversations of the onlookers. He asks them if he can depend on their cooperation, but proceeds "without waiting for a reply." He allows time to tell the history of the old flower, but then betrays impatience again, as he throws the rose into the vase. The narrator has observed that the "sunshine came through the window . . . and fell directly across this vase; so that a mild splendor was reflected from it" (229). This detail combines with the doctor's alternate pauses and movements to suggest that the effects are dependent on timing the toss of the rose to coincide with the direct rays of the sunshine. Thus, while the narrative attaches historical importance to the refreshed flower, the details reveal the technical arrangements which account for the change of hue, for the flower "assumed a deepening tinge of crimson . . . and twigs of foliage became green" (230-1).

The description of the first drink of the water also implies magical reasons while revealing scientific explanations. Again the narrator attends to the doctor's control of timing. The foursome were "inclined to swallow it at once. But Dr. Heidegger besought them to stay a moment." Finally, however, they quaff the liquid and seem healthier. They "fancied that some magic power had really begun to smooth . . . their brows." But the narrative description provides another explanation for the improvement: "A sudden glow of cheerful sunshine,
brightening over all their visages at once" (232-233). He offers the simile as a familiar reference, but it seems to also identify the cause of their healthful glow.

This pattern of coordination of drinks to sunlight recurs. Heidegger refuses the eager requests of his friends "Quick!—give us more!" with his cool "Patience, patience." The amazed narrator records "a change on their whole systems. Their eyes grew clear and bright; a dark shade deepened among their silvery locks." He expresses his wonder, "Was it delusion!" But, again, he identifies the secret in imagery: "The shadows of age were flitting from the widow's face like darkness from the crimson day-break" (233). As before, the simile offers a literal explanation for the change. The doctor times the pourings to insure that the vase lets sunlight pass through at an effective angle.

In response to yet another request, the doctor does not pause. The association with the sunlight recurs: "It was now so nearly sunset, that the chamber had grown duskier than ever; but a mild and moon-like splendor gleamed from within the vase, and rested alike on the four guests, and on the doctor's venerable figure." This is the first time the doctor falls under the light beams, and, significantly, the foursome "felt like new-created beings, in a new-created universe" (235). Thus the party enjoys a final delusion as they drink the third draught.
and see Dr. Heidegger in the new, but diminishing, light.

As the experiment ends and the sun sets, the narrator observes the party as reflected in the mirror. He attributes their "withered" and "shrivelled" appearance to "the duskiness of the chamber" and to a "strange deception" (236-7). And, when the doctor shows the dying rose, the narrator offers the detail that the old gentleman is "holding it in the light of the sunset clouds" (237). Although he fails to draw a conclusion about the connection between the effect and its cause, he consistently, albeit accidentally, asserts both elements of the experiment.

The narrator's observations do, however, convince him that the effect is at least partially related to the authority of the doctor. At first he thinks that the party "fancied" their regained youth (233). After the experiment ends, however, he is impressed by the doctor's authority: "At the motion of Dr. Heidegger's hand, the four rioters assumed their seats; the more readily, because their violent exertions had wearied them, youthful though they were" (237). He no longer speaks of the way they seem to be, but of how they "were." The gesture represents the authority which directs the experiment. And a growing interest in that authority as it signifies the doctor's detachment characterizes the narration. He notes "philosophic coolness," complaisance, and "venerable dignity"
throughout the descriptions of the doctor. Gradually, then, the narrator fails to discern the causes for the changes, and, therefore, he accepts everything as a result, and as proof, of the magic of both the water and the doctor.

When, in his earlier description of the study, the narrator surrenders to fantasy, he betrays a predilection to this equally subjective perception of the experiment. Since the doctor is most familiar with the sun's lighting of his study, the technical success of that experiment will most likely occur in that room. Granting a general suspicion that magical occurrences are likely in this chamber, the doctor's invitation to his friends almost guarantees their susceptibility to suggestions which correspond with the illusions they will experience. Likewise, an extremely credulous narrator urges readers to expect trickery, ineffectuality, or both. The possibility that a scientific achievement will be observed, therefore, becomes less likely. Yet, the foursome who arrived "without life enough in their souls or bodies to be animated even by the prospect of growing young again" leave "resolved to . . . quaff at morning, noon, and night, from the fountain of youth" (238). Dr. Heidegger may have succeeded where Ponce de Leon could not "'for he [Ponce de Leon] never sought it in the right place'" (231). For Dr. Heidegger, the study is "the right place."
The narrative limitations are clearly demonstrated in the story and must be considered in evaluating the doctor. The physician's possible carelessness in treating his fiance cannot be excused by his success in recapturing his friends' characteristic zest for life. Yet, neither does a close personal relationship between doctor and patient guarantee professional success in overcoming illness. The story of Sylvia Ward implicates the doctor in her death, and it explains away the less acceptable possibility that science offers no panacea. The story of the doctor's consultations with Hippocrates betray society's doubts that the contents of so many volumes could be studied by a single student. And the story of the haunting mirror conveys a certain sympathy for the tremendous responsibilities which might haunt a conscientious physician.

In conclusion, the illogic of unsatisfied curiosity and the inordinate hope, with which ignorance approaches those with some knowledge, accounts for such stories as surround Dr. Heidegger. "That very singular man" incorporates these fluctuating expectations and superstitions into his experiment. With his psychological insight and his technical scrupulosity, he brings human imagination to its own rescue.
Chapter IV
A Reconsideration of "The Birth-mark"

Aylmer's Success

To fear science or knowledge, lest it disturb our old beliefs, is to fear the influx of the Divine wisdom into the souls of our fellow men; for what is science but the piecemeal revelation—uncovering—of the plan of creation, by the agency of those chosen prophets of nature whom God has illuminated from the central light of truth for that single purpose?\(^1\)

Oliver Wendell Holmes encouraged Harvard medical students with this statement in 1861. The fears and hopes it cites motivate the dialog between Aylmer and Georgiana in "The Birth-mark." Hawthorne's short story also uses the religious register as the couple struggles to reconcile human limitation with the hopes and fears which motivate their actions.

The tale records the efforts of Aylmer, whose reputation as a chemist is established among his appreciative peers, to remove a tiny birth-mark from his wife's cheek. The tale's narrator expresses concern that Aylmer will not be able to blend his scientific dedication and his

\(^{1}\) Oliver Wendell Holmes, "Border Lines of Knowledge in Some Provinces of Medical Science: An Introductory Lecture (Boston, Mass.: Ticknor and Fields, 1862), p. 54; hereafter cited as \textit{Border Lines}.\)
love for Georgiana, but the birth-mark becomes the focus of both dedications. Aylmer's professional opinion requires the removal of the mark; his love for Georgiana compounds his concerns about the possibly fatal process. With the assistance of his under-worker, Aminadab, however, Aylmer proceeds to remove the mark. Convinced by the expressions on his face, Georgiana agrees to the removal, observes his progress, and voices her concerns. After reading his journal, Georgiana makes every effort to encourage Aylmer through frequent bouts with self-doubt, urging him to proceed confidently. On other occasions, their conversations about the awful power of excessive science become theoretical and ominous. But their discussions about the birth-mark enjoy a practical orientation. Nevertheless, as Aylmer becomes more involved in preparations, Georgiana becomes anxious to offer her own observations. In their anxiety they share their deepest fears during an emotional confrontation in Aylmer's laboratory. Finally, they agree to proceed, but, although the mark disappears, Georgiana dies. The chuckles of the lab assistant, who alone dissented when he knew of Aylmer's intentions, precede the narrator's concluding remarks. Recalling his earlier suspicions about Aylmer, the narrator comments that Aylmer loses his beloved because he fails to look "beyond the shadowy scope of Time," but,
Instead succumbs to the "momentary circumstance."  

Throughout the tale, the narrator's remarks and the exchanges between Aylmer and Georgiana dramatize Holmes's observation. The narrator notes that some "ardent votaries" expect their fellows to "lay his hand on the secret of creative force" (36). And Georgiana affirms Holmes's "prophet of nature" attitude in her encouragement: "You have deep science! All the world bears witness to it. You have achieved great wonders" (41). Aylmer similarly echoes Holmes's view as he discourages Georgiana's fear of the power to prolong life interminably: "I would not wrong either you or myself by working such inharmonious effects upon our lives" (46). He urges her logical consideration of a potent drug as he assures her that "its virtuous potency is yet greater than its harmful one" (47).

Although Hawthorne's characters voice the same reasonable expectations as Holmes does, however, critics have considered Hawthorne's characters to be spokespersons for Hawthorne's disdain for science.

Like Holmes, Georgiana speaks as one of the "ardent votaries" who consider science in religious terms. The scientist-as-god analogy which such an attitude implies

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Nathaniel Hawthorne, "The Birth-mark," in Mosses From an Old Manse, ed. William Charvat, et al. (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1974), p. 56. All further references to this work appear in the text.
has been considered by critics as an Hawthornean judgment against scientists who try to utilize peer adoration to justify an inflated ego. But Georgiana and Aylmer do not simply enact the parts of a religious dichotomy of votary and deity. In fact, they struggle to maintain realistic perspective and individuality while involved in two relationships which tend to prescribe limited roles. As husband and wife, then as doctor and patient, each attempts to protect himself and the other from the loss of self implicit in these roles. My study of Georgiana and Aylmer focuses on their attempts to extract the advantages of those relationships without becoming enmeshed in prescribed responses.

Critics have found the couple unsuccessful in this attempt and characterize each as a victim of excess. Studies shows Aylmer as an embodiment of ambition and idealism. And his journal proves that his aim often exceeds his actual achievement. But the critics who judge Aylmer on the basis of his disappointments show sympathy for his frustration more than objectivity about his achievements. For Aylmer also finds his journal the record of failure. He "can scarcely glance over [it] and keep [his] senses" (49). So profoundly humbled is Aylmer by the relative triviality of his achievements compared to his ideals, that he discontinues his pursuits. He does not resume his "half-forgotten investigations" until he
decides to remove the birth-mark, a goal which, for Aylmer, is uniquely realizable (43). In spite of his self devaluation and utter frustration with his achievements, however, critics insist on his ambition.

Henry G. Fairbanks cites Aylmer's egoism when even the narrator dares not affirm such faith in scientists. The introduction explains that "We know not whether Aylmer possessed this degree of faith in man's ultimate control over nature" (36). Fairbanks does know: "Auto-intoxicated, Aylmer ascended from absolutism towards apotheosis."\(^3\) His view may derive from Georgiana's announcement that she has begun to "worship him more than ever" (49). But it ignores the caution and humility in Aylmer's response to his wife's excessive devotion: "Ah, wait for this one success . . . then worship me if you will" (50). Aylmer's intoxicant is neither pride nor ambition but the "luxury of Georgiana's voice," which he wisely urges into song when her praises seem excessive.

Studies of Georgiana focus on excess. Her attitude, however, seldom does betray irrational admiration. Both her admiration and her caution remain implicit in her responses to Aylmer. Sensitive to his self doubts and his concerns for her safety, she insists that she is willing

to submit to the cure and chides him for withholding his concern for her life: "Why did you hesitate to tell me this?" (52) Indeed, her response to Aylmer's demonstration sounds like blind submission to his science: "There needed no proof... I joyfully stake all upon your word" (53). But the submission is meant as encouragement, and occurs only after conversations wherein Georgiana insists on explanations and answers to alleviate her own fears. Her caution is manifest in her warnings against uncontrolled science which Aylmer's self-assurance occasionally seems to champion. At these times she insists: "It is terrible to possess such power, or even to dream of possessing it!" (46). In response to Aylmer's vacillation, then, Georgiana offers either encouragement or caution.

Although her responses demonstrate her sensitivity to Aylmer's fluctuating ego, critics stress Georgiana's irrational submission as the factor which convinces Aylmer to perform the fatal experiment. Reid offers: "The theme is... the tragedy of this transcendent, open-minded faith." But Georgiana struggles to avoid unquestioning acceptance of Aylmer's skills. Her encouragement of his progress follows her perusal of his library, his journals,

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and even his laboratory. Her ultimate submission to his science results from her own investigations and observations.

The narrative voice, I believe, encourages the critical responses to Aylmer's ego and Georgiana's weakness as excessive and representative. The narrative tendency to abhor or adore a character, instead of observing, assigns value to the simplest actions. Quinn discusses the appeal of this narration in his discussion of the story as an allegory. "Human beings will reward the novelist who provides them with characters who are more lofty of moral stature than themselves, but who venture into crimes beyond their daring."\(^5\) This response confirms the narrative preference but denies the reality of the characters. Neither Aylmer nor Georgiana are more "lofty of moral stature" than readers (real people?). And neither commits a crime.

Although Georgiana's death dramatizes the conclusion and implies the failure of Aylmer's experiment, it does not validate the moralization in which the narrator indulges at the conclusion of the story. Aylmer's silence following his wife's death affords the narrator his opportunity to conjecture: "Yet, had Aylmer reached a pro-

founder wisdom, he need not thus have flung away the happiness, which would have woven his mortal life of the self-same texture with the celestial" (56). Thomas Walsh summarizes the limitations of a reading which starts at the end of "The Birth-mark: "Hawthorne has created two highly individualized characters whose complexity and significance cannot be recognized merely by reading the author's moral at the end of the story."6 Since the moral may not even represent the author's sympathies, other judgments of Aylmer and Georgiana must be considered.

Aylmer's frequent reassurance of his wife, and his expressed concern with her health, explains his pronouncements and demonstrations to prove the efficacy of his science. When his own doubts arise, Georgiana assumes the role of "ardent votary" and voices the praise of science. Other judgments are presented by the professional societies, Georgiana's associates, and Aylmer's assistant—Aminadab. Though each enjoys the generous evaluations of the narrator, their observations emerge as fairly independent reports of, or contrasts to, the characters of Aylmer and Georgiana. A consideration of the light each of these judgments sheds on the relationship demonstrates the concern of the author to provide information other than the primary narration about the couple.

Of Aylmer's scientific career we have the narrator's introductory overstatement that he was "an eminent proficient in every branch of natural philosophy" (36). We don't know until he criticizes the excesses of scientific idealists that this is not his personal opinion of the scientist. The irony of his tone echoes, however, as he attributes the achievement of impossible ideals to the intellectually gluttonous scientists who seek "congenial aliment in pursuits which "may lead to the creation of new worlds" (36). The incredulous narrator characterizes the scientist as overly involved, and as unfit for the world until he "cleared his fine countenance from the furnace-smoke, [and] washed the stain of acids from his fingers" (36). Determined to portray a fatal antithesis between professional and personal commitment, the narrator claims popular support for his argument: "In these days it was not unusual for the love of science to rival the love of woman, in its depth and absorbing energy" (36). Neither the scientist's professional ideals, his personal fastidiousness, nor his capacity for intimacy escapes the narrative criticism.

Undaunted by the acclaim of "all the learned societies in Europe," the narrator pursues his course by dismissing the societies as similarly unrealistic. Thus, Georgiana considers the reputation of Aylmer as recorded in the "Transactions of the Royal Society, in which mem-

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bers, knowing little of the limits of natural possibility, were continually recording wonders, or proposing methods whereby wonders might be wrought" (48). Georgiana's consideration of such idealism evokes her sympathy for the scientist's frustration. Unable to achieve the "inestimable gems which lay hidden beyond his reach," he becomes discouraged from seeking the "merest pebbles" which represent realistic goals (40). For Georgiana the journal inspires constant encouragement of Aylmer. The narrator's appreciation of the society's praise differs from Georgiana's. Instead of proof that Aylmer is ambitious to create a new world, Georgiana finds the professionals' acclaim a valid counterpart to her husband's doubts that his mundane achievements merit continuing.

As Georgiana encourages Aylmer, he becomes more realistic. In his earliest pursuits Aylmer depended on the "congenial aliment" of the imagination as found in the constantly challenging pursuits of scientific knowledge (36). The metaphor of spiritual nourishment recurs when Georgiana "[pours] out the liquid music of her voice to quench the thirst of his spirit" (50). His "boyish exuberance" returns and he resumes his studies. The similarity of metaphor disproves the narrator's assertion that the conflict between the two affections could be problematic. Indeed, Aylmer returns to his studies because of, not in spite of, his marriage. Instead of having "devoted
himself . . . too unreservedly to scientific studies, ever
to be weaned from them" (36), Aylmer has devoted himself
too completely to unrealizable goals and is weaned by his
own failures and by Georgiana's introduction of a more
realistic aim. Thus, Aylmer develops his science beyond
the contemplative stage which had impressed the Royal
Society.

Her success in encouraging him to pursue this aim be-
comes evident as Aylmer gradually resumes his laboratory
work. The added attention to domesticity suggests the
difference in his attitude. Less exclusively scientific,
more interested in the human being on whom he will prac-
tice his skills, Aylmer's efforts to change his apartment
from the "smoky, dingy, sombre rooms . . . into a series
of beautiful apartments" show a sincere, if superficial,
attempt to blend science and humanity (44). Also, his
efforts recall his earlier cleansing of hands and face,
similarly in preparation for Georgiana. The difference is
that this change in the appearance of the apartments
signals not his departure from but his return to the lab-
oratory. Having earlier given up on efforts to extract
secrets from that "jealous patentee," Mother Nature, he
resumes with new confidence "in his science" (42-44).
Aylmer's efforts to please Georgiana motivate his personal
and domestic concerns; and his marriage marks his return
to the laboratory as a more humanized scientist.
Because of his past disappointments, however, Aylmer requires (or inspires) Georgiana's continuous encouragement. Her sensitivity to his need prompts her to attend to his attempts at illusion. "Though she had some indistinct idea of the method of these optical phenomena, still the illusion was almost perfect enough to warrant the belief, that her husband possessed sway over the spiritual world" (44). Therefore, she finally urges her husband to discontinue his attempts to convince her with illusions and to have faith in his science. His attempts at illusion, although indicative of his underestimation of Georgiana's perception and insight, betray neither immorality nor insanity but an immaturity. Aylmer tries Georgiana's patience more than her credibility and does not affect her resolve, which is based on her study, not his tricks. The narrator's conclusion that Aylmer had not "reached a profounder wisdom" and critical insistence on his excessive ambition dismiss both the recognition of the professional societies and the effect of Georgiana's encouragement.

A contrast to the opinions of Georgiana's contemporaries prior to her marriage emphasizes the effect of his marriage on Aylmer's attitude toward the birth-mark. It is their opinion which has helped to form hers, and Aylmer's insistence on the importance of removing the mark conflicts with the opinion of those who admired it.
Georgiana's acceptance was based on her sympathy with those who thought it "might be ... a charm" (37). Her reconsideration, based on Aylmer's questions and apparent fear of the birth-mark signals her departure from her previous fantasy or rationalization. Aylmer's insistence that the mark's removal might improve her appearance, then, suggests that he qualifies his statements according to his understanding of her previous attitudes. His own concern may be more scientific and medical. His attachment of aesthetic significance to the removal of the birth-mark may, in fact, be a professional ruse. Holmes advises young practitioners on honesty with patients: "Your patient has no more right to all the truth you know than he has to all the medicine in your saddlebags, ... if he hears the word carcinoma, he will certainly look it out in a medical dictionary ... tell him he has asthmatic symptoms [sic]." Since Aylmer "thought little or nothing of the matter before" his marriage, his concern is probably not merely aesthetic, since such considerations may seem of more importance during courtship than after (38). Likewise, the moral implications were more habits of thought than motives for proceeding in his practice: "He handled physical details, as if there were nothing beyond them;  

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7 Oliver Wendell Holmes, "The Young Practitioner," in his Medical Essays (Boston, Massachusetts, 1891), p. 389.
yet spiritualized them all" (49). For Aylmer, the scientific implications are foremost, and until he marries, he has neither the leisure nor the inclination to consider the birth-mark's significance.

As a result of his observations after marriage, Aylmer's earlier disinterest changes to serious concentration. If his opinion begins to echo that of the "fastidious" women who considered the mark "hideous," the change signals his movement from romantic blindness to realistic and objective consideration. It is through contrast with Aminadab's opinion that the motive for Aylmer's growing revulsion at the birth-mark becomes clear. The narrator, then Aminadab, accept the mark. The narrator offers his opinion to explain Aylmer's objections to it: her great beauty provides such a contrast that Georgiana's birth-mark seems ugly. Had she another flaw, Aylmer "might have felt his affection heightened by the prettiness of this mimic hand, now vaguely portrayed, now lost, now stealing forth again, and glimmering to-and-fro with every pulse of emotion that throbbed within her heart" (38).

The aesthetic appeal of the mark likewise inspires Aminadab's statement: "If she were my wife, I'd never part with that birth-mark" (43). Aminadab's remark is less poetic, the concise utterance of a usually quiet laboratory assistant. It emphasizes concisely the narrative view. Aylmer's response contrasts to both: "He was not
long in rendering the birth-mark a frightful object" (39).
Only Aylmer wishes to remove the mark, and only Aylmer
is a scientist. The narrator's appreciation prompts his
melancholy observation of the mark's disappearance:
"Watch the stain of the rainbow fading out of the sky,"
he urges to describe the phenomenon (54). Aminadab's
strictly mechanical response and the narrator's romantic
lament emphasize by contrast Aylmer's medical concern and
perception.

In contrast to Aminadab's, Aylmer's opinion seems
coldly scientific and objective. But the close associa-
tion between master and servant suggests that Aminadab's
opinions represent considerations with which Aylmer does
sympathize. Since Aminadab "seemed to represent [the]
physical nature" to which Aylmer's nature provided the
complementary "spiritual element," Aminadab may voice con-
cerns of Aylmer which he must, for the sake of Georgiana's
health, ignore (43). Aylmer must deny his sympathies for
his wife's fears and perform that operation which he con-
siders necessary for her health or appearance. The utter
lack of scientific ability in Aminadab renders him the
appropriate spokesperson for the romantic view that a
husband should accept his wife as she is. This is his
"mechanical" response. Aminadab does not know the signifi-
cance, for instance, of Georgiana's symptomatic "sensation
in the fatal birth-mark" (50). Aylmer's affection for
Aminadab, the affection for a man who has served as "underworker during his whole scientific career," does not change his scientific decision. Aminadab speaks Aylmer's sympathies as a husband, but Aylmer maintains his professional resolve.

Contrasted to the attitude of Aminadab and Georgiana's companions, Aylmer's judgment seems more objective. The opinion of the learned societies establishes Aylmer's capability while it suggests the folly of lofty aims. Removal of Georgiana's birth-mark is Aylmer's first realistic undertaking and, without the acclaim of professionals, Aylmer requires Georgiana's support to proceed in spite of discouraging public opinion. Through the narrative moralization and Aminadab's chuckles, the vulgar public opinion voices its judgment of Aylmer as he seems to cause Georgiana's death. Since that death does indeed suggest the failure of scientific achievement, its significance must be reconsidered.

Prior, to Georgiana's death, Aylmer announces the end of his experiment. His proclamation that "it is successful" follows his opening of the curtain (55). In this gesture, "He drew aside the [same] window-curtain" with which he had excluded the "sunshine, which would have interfered with his chemical processes" (55-44). The introduction of light, therefore, signals the completion of his part in Georgiana's treatment. A full account of his
scientific procedures precede this signal of its completion. That account emphasizes the care and skill with which Aylmer performs the operation. Except for the fantastic coincidence, then, there may be little association between the operation and the death of the patient. The treatment itself, or delayed treatment, may account for the complication and death. Aylmer had registered his concern that his studies disclosed "this Crimson Hand, as superficial as it seems, had clutched its grasp into [her] being, with a strength of which [he] had no previous conception" (51). But his own joyful pronouncement of the operation renders such a possibility unexpected if not unlikely.

If her death does not signal his scientific failure, the dramatically intense event must serve to focus attention on her final remarks. Knowing that his exuberance will suffer from both the death of his wife and the realization of the triviality of his achievement, she attempts to prevent her husband from again abandoning his studies. Her evaluation praises both his motives and his actual achievement in an attempt to preclude this response: "You have aimed loftily!—you have done nobly!" (55) Such might, indeed, be the case. Aylmer's diagnosis and Georgiana's symptoms seem to require treatment. Whether because of the treatment or its delay, the death coincides with the culmination of the experiment. Aylmer is likely
to make the connection and Georgiana attempts to prevent his despair: "Do not repent, that, with so high and pure a feeling, you have rejected the best that earth could offer" (55). Georgiana's self-image, soundly autonomous in this statement, survives her husband's watchful disdain for her birth-mark. Her expression of sympathy for his loss and frustration also echo his earlier recognition that "apparently working in the broadest sunshine, nature ... keep(s) her own secrets" (42). Neither Georgiana nor Aylmer can know these secrets and Georgiana attempts to remind her husband of the insignificance of these greater mysteries in comparison to the importance of achieving what can be achieved.

If Aylmer's spirit is encouraged by Georgiana's final words, his final silence provides the profoundest expression of authorial sympathy. The success of the experiment cannot be judged by more than the phenomenon it strives to accomplish. In his lecture, Holmes warns the medical students that "All 'methods' of treatment end in disappointment of those extravagant expectations which men are wont to entertain of medical art." Hawthorne's sympathetic portrayal of Aylmer and Georgiana focuses on the "more than human tenderness" necessary to maintain faith in science (55). Disappointing results and public

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objections threaten the loftiest spirit. Aylmer attempts to modify Georgiana's extravagant expectations; Georgiana tries to prevent the disappointment from becoming despair. The success of their attempts seems dubious in the light of Georgiana's death. But Hawthorne describes a struggle against emotional deprivation. And it is in this struggle which both Aylmer and Georgiana succeed.
The Personal Dilemma of Giacomo Rappaccini

Encouraged by the hospitable chambermaid, Giovanni Guasconti postpones his studies to look from his window onto the exotic garden cultivated by the cautious Giacomo Rappaccini. Although the old doctor arouses Giovanni's suspicions, and in spite of warnings by Rappaccini's professional rival, Pietro Baglioni, the young student enters the garden to court Rappaccini's daughter, Beatrice. Not until his own breath kills a spider does Giovanni believe Baglioni's allegations that Rappaccini deliberately poisons his daughter and, ultimately her friend, --Giovanni. Certain, then, that Beatrice's breath has poisoned a flower, a lizard and an insect, Giovanni offers Beatrice an antidote prescribed by Baglioni. He proves that he, too, is poisoned as he breathes death to a swarm of insects; she proves that she is not an accomplice in her father's scheme as she drinks the antidote. Rappaccini observes and apparently mistakes the gesture for an engagement toast. But his happy blessings to the couple elicit only Beatrice's ungrateful tirade. As Baglioni looks on the scene from a window, Beatrice dies.

Even before her death, Rappaccini enjoys little
sympathy from the other characters in Hawthorne's "Rappaccini's Daughter." Each character voices some objection to the scientist. Lisabetta, the chambermaid, refuses to claim Rappaccini's garden as a part of the house because it has not proven "fruitful of better pot herbs." Giovanni suspects that Rappaccini's sallow face "could never, even in his more youthful days, have expressed much warmth of heart" (95). Professor Baglioni confirms not only Giovanni's observation but also the unsympathetic consensus: "As for Rappaccini, it is said of him--and I, who know the man well, can answer for its truth--that he cares infinitely more for science than for mankind" (100). Even Beatrice ultimately blames her father's "fatal love of science" for having "estranged [her] from all society of [her] kind" (123). Rappaccini's efforts have appeared domestically useless to Lisabetta, personally debilitating to Guasconti, professionally embarrassing to Baglioni, and personally stifling to Beatrice.

Critical response has repeated these complaints. While forgiving his inadequate contributions to Lisabetta's pantry, the scholars support Rappaccini's other detractors. Edward H. Rosenberry summarizes the thwarted relationship between the doctor and his daughter: "In 'Rappaccini's

\[^1\]Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Rappaccini's Daughter," in his Mosses from an Old Manse, ed. William Charvat, et al. (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1974), p. 94. All further references to this work appear in the text.
Daughter’s innocent humanity in the guise of a beautiful girl is beguiled by the scientist-who-would-be-God into a state of unquestioning and finally self-destructive discipleship."^2 Rappaccini's ambitions also interest Donald Ringe who believes that Rappaccini's emotional capacity is abnormal. He says that Rappaccini's heart has "been so withered by intellect that he is incapable of being softened by remorse."^3 Thus his practices convince readers, as well as they convince Guasconti, that Rappaccini's motives are suspect, his character flawed.

As an experimenter, Rappaccini fulfills critical expectations for an Hawthornean scientist, an expectation that scientists, especially physicians, are villains. Rosenberry discusses the pattern: "One of the plainest attitudes in Hawthorne's writings is a contemptuous distrust of science, which he personified in villain after villain of Rappaccini's stamp. If Baglioni seems at times contemptible himself, perhaps it is because he, too, was a Hawthorne physician."^4 Unwilling to extend the distrust to an entire profession, Eberhard Alsen limits his judgment to the doctor whose motive is not "merely a

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^2Edward H. Rosenberry, "Hawthorne's Allegory of Science: 'Rappaccini's Daughter,'" AL, 32 (1960), 42.


^4Rosenberry, p. 45.
thirst for knowledge but a desire to make himself the father and god of a new poisonous world. Even more specific in identifying Rappaccini's professional error is Taylor Stoehr's assertion that Rappaccini "makes Giovanni the subject of one of his experiments." Giovanni, an integral part of Beatrice's life, will serve as surrogate victim on whom Rappaccini may perform his diabolical experiments. Like Baglioni, the critics of Rappaccini's professional practices question both his motives and his eccentricity.

Of Rappaccini's personal trespasses, Randall Stewart offers a qualification to the common criticism. He admits that Beatrice may be to a certain extent an accomplice, but concludes that it is "Rappaccini ... who was a great sinner ... whose sin ... was intellectual arrogance." This sin recalls Rappaccini's observations of and experiments on Beatrice and on Giovanni. Nina Baym explains that Rappaccini "violates the sanctity of the human heart by [his] inhuman poking and prodding." These detractors echo Beatrice's complaint against "the evil, which [he]

hast striven to mingle with her being" (127). In general, the critics study Rappaccini's character to support the complaints of Giovanni, Baglioni, and Beatrice.

Such considerations, however, ignore the author's qualifications of those characters' criticism of Rappaccini. By including positive remarks from each detractor Hawthorne suggests the strengths as well as the weaknesses of Rappaccini. From Lisabetta we learn that Rappaccini "distils these plants into medicines that are as potent as a charm" (94). Giovanni, as his most suspicious, must admire the "intentness" of the gardening scientist. And Baglioni admits that Rappaccini's professional accomplishments are considerable: "Our worshipful Dr. Rappaccini has as much science as any member of the faculty" (99). Beatrice's criticism of her father is uncharacteristic; her earlier affection for her father betrays an understanding of an appreciation for the science which she ultimately refuses. She admires her father's dedication and attributes his success to having "spent a life-time in such studies" (111). If the suspicions about Rappaccini may be Hawthorne's own, so might the admiration. Alfred S. Reid urges a "re-examination of this scientist-as-god-villain approach that dominates Hawthorne criticism. One does not have to be a scientist to sense that Hawthorne is being 'used' by humanist critics to express a strong
surge of hostility toward science." If much criticism of Hawthorne's scientists reveals more about the opinions of the critics than about the opinions of Hawthorne, such a re-examination is necessary.

The critical emphasis has focused on social criticism of a profession instead of on the influence of that profession on personal relationships. Hawthorne, however, does not ignore personal relationships. His view of Rappaccini includes portraits of both the father of a beautiful young woman and the discoverer of a method of immunization. Exploring the character of Rappaccini reveals not simply another villainous scientist but a troubled father. And Hawthorne's attitude toward the conflict Rappaccini experiences in these roles can be partially determined through a study of the characters who judge Rappaccini. Nina Baym has described the problem: "Few critical questions about Hawthorne's fictional world are as central and as baffling as that of the author's stand on the moral crises he so fully depicts." One solution is this consideration of the motives and habits of perception of characters who evaluate the crises.

That Rappaccini does indeed experience a moral crisis is manifest in his bewildered response to Beatrice in the

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10 Baym, p. 31.
final scene. At the conclusion of that scene, Rappaccini stands mute over the dead body of his only daughter. Baglioni almost gloats as he asks the bereft father: "Rappaccini! Rappaccini! And is this the upshot of your experiment?" (128). The unsympathetic tone of the question confirms the general view of Rappaccini in this scene. Beatrice has similarly pointed to her father's failure. Whether responsible directly for Beatrice's death or for inadvertently increasing her susceptibility to the lethal effects of Baglioni's antidote, Rappaccini evokes the disdain of Beatrice and Baglioni.

Hawthorne has Rappaccini present for this criticism, however, as he has not for earlier criticisms by Baglioni and Guasconti. And the effect is to focus attention on Rappaccini's complete lack of comprehension of the attitudes of the others. He does not understand Beatrice's response to his attempt to bequeath to her his skill and his knowledge. Neither her physical immunity nor her intellectual development pleases Beatrice, and Rappaccini cannot comprehend her reluctance. His failure to respond at all to Baglioni is similarly a failure to understand what it is that angers Beatrice and Baglioni. While Rappaccini's unusual practices and his failures in understanding do not justify his participation in Beatrice's destruction, his personal conflict becomes central to our consideration in view of his bewildered response to his
Rappaccini's personal crisis is central to the two scenes wherein he relates to Beatrice. In each scene, however, the interpretation of the struggle focuses on the scientist's actions as evidence to support the observer's prejudice. Both the crisis and the prejudices of the observers can be understood by analysis of these two scenes.

The first critic to observe Rappaccini, Giovanni, observes an intimate exchange between troubled parent and vivacious child. Giovanni, however, fails to note the most typical relationship and focuses on the entire scene as it develops his original impression. He originally noted the excessive caution of Rappaccini as the scientist cultivated his flowers. Convinced of Rappaccini's eccentricity, then, Giovanni expects—and finds—proof of this excess in the relationship between Rappaccini and Beatrice. A repeated characterization of Beatrice by comparison to the flowers emphasizes Guasconti's expectation: He has determined that Rappaccini cannot be intimate with the flowers; since Beatrice is like flowers, it is likely that he cannot have a caring relationship for his daughter either.

Even if Rappaccini's relationship with Beatrice is unusually impersonal, Giovanni is predisposed to judge such a dispassionate attitude as abnormal. For Giovanni's ex-
perience is of the opposite excess. Not inclined to exercise any kind of self-protection or precautions, Giovanni cannot understand Rappaccini's actions. Giovanni, for example, responds "mechanically" to Lisabetta in putting his head out the window; he wanders haphazardly into a florist's shop; he unthinkingly quaffs the drinks and digests the fables offered by Baglioni. Characterized as careless and capricious, Giovanni surprises no one when he chooses the least intelligent course to insure his survival in his relationship to Beatrice: certain that her effect upon him threatens his well being he chooses to stay near her but to remain out of her sight. He knows the plan is foolish, rejects better plans, and indulges an inclination to study cures instead of exercising preventions. Therefore, he must occasionally attempt to "assuage the fever of his spirit by a rapid walk through the streets of Padua" (105). Using his own impetuosity as his criterion, then, Giovanni may be suspicious of even normal efforts to self-protection.

More like the emotionally spontaneous Beatrice than her deliberate father, Giovanni fails to identify the concerns which underly Rappaccini's dedication and cannot imagine the felt responsibility to entrust a lifetime vocation to a willing and capable heir. Rappaccini's failing health and earnest professionalism combine to necessitate such an assignment. But Giovanni interprets the arrange-
ment as further proof of Rappaccini's exaggerated sense of self-protection. The student's sympathies exaggerate the eccentricity of Rappaccini as they magnify the vulnerability of Beatrice.

The interactions of Rappaccini and Beatrice, however, fail to support this dichotomy. Beatrice's flagrant physicality with the plants may express as much scientific enthusiasm as personal carelessness; Rappaccini's watchful intentness may signal emotional appreciation as well as detached observance, or allergies. And, during their conversation, both father and daughter share intellectual and emotional concerns. Rappaccini's request for help includes a personal confession of concern for his own "shattered health" and a high valuation of the plants, "our chief treasure" (97). Appealing for both sympathy and assistance, Rappaccini's manner betrays an ongoing personal intimacy in his communications with Beatrice. This and the sharing of a mutual appreciation and knowledge of plants would contrast to Giovanni's expectation of a distance between father and daughter like that between scientist and plants. Rappaccini's confession belies any failure to relate to Beatrice. And her unquestioning acceptance of his entrusting to her the "many needful offices" reveals her own trust in science and in her own abilities. Unless Rappaccini has poisoned both mind and body of his daughter, the small family share mutual con-
cerns and enjoy a personal assuredness of capability.

Even as he assigns the well-trained Beatrice to care for the garden, however, Rappaccini does not fail to notice, and fear, Beatrice's youthful overexuberance. His words indicate this reticence: "Henceforth, I fear, this plant must be consigned to your sole charge" (97). With his accumulated knowledge of the plants and his natural anxiety about his daughter's health, Rappaccini doubts the wisdom in her free involvement with the potent plants. Giovanni's interpretation of Rappaccini's actions, however, fails to include this consideration. When Rappaccini "took his daughter's arm and departed," Giovanni guesses that he had either completed his "labors in the garden" or discovered Giovanni at the window. Rappaccini might have escorted his enthusiastic child from the garden knowing that momentarily the plants would begin to exude their "oppressive exhalations" (96). He may have suffered the exhaustion of any parent whose attempts to impart knowledge and responsibility to a child are frustrated. And Beatrice's willingness to help, exceeding her ability to exercise discretion, would certainly frustrate Rappaccini.

The difference in maturity, source of both hope and consternation for Rappaccini, also interests the observant Giovanni. Rappaccini hopes that Beatrice will be mature enough to care for the plants and for herself. At the same time he expects her youthful enthusiasm to insure
longevity and energy in her exercise of that responsibility. Giovanni, on the other hand, intently establishing differences between the two, fails to consider such complementary characteristics. He is attracted to science as a respected vocation and to Beatrice as a beautiful, and sought after, woman. Giovanni considers their differences in age, but he does not make a parallel comparison. He speaks of Rappaccini's age as proof of scientific intellect and cultivation. The "grey hair . . . and thin grey beard" convince Giovanni that Rappaccini epitomizes the scholar (95). Beatrice's youth and beauty, however, do not prove that she is unscientific. Her youth is most often mentioned as a corollary to "bloom" and "energy." Rappaccini's interest is paternal and practical; Giovanni's is not. And this difference limits Giovanni's perception of Rappaccini's quandry.

Rappaccini is unaware that ignorance and youth are sometimes associated with beauty. Unaware that the scientific education of Beatrice might horrify Giovanni, Rappaccini attempts to protect both his vocational investment and his daughter's future by entrusting his garden to Beatrice. The pathos of the mistake goes unnoticed by the aesthetically-oriented Giovanni. Insisting that she is beautiful, and, therefore, assuming that she is ignorant and powerless, he considers Rappaccini's assignment of gardening responsibilities as a victimization by
a self-protective villain. Thus, Giovanni does not portray the real conflict for Rappaccini. Instead he characterizes the old man as the embodiment of the overly cautious attitudes of those "beyond the middle term of life" (95).

Despite this natural tendency to suspect the attitudes of another generation, Giovanni imitates the older scientist. The imitation offers humorous contrast to Rappaccini and actually emphasizes the scientist's assiduous care and patience with his daughter. Rappaccini's decision to entrust his garden of flowers follows a lifetime of deliberate concern for both garden and progeny. Giovanni's gift of flowers, by contrast, is purchased because he was "happening to pass by a florist's" (101). Instead of expert care, he manages only a constant, probably suffocating and dehydrating, grip on the bouquet. Finally, "scarcely knowing what he did, Giovanni threw down the bouquet" (104). The bungled presentation of his almost accidental acquisition emphasizes the thoughtfulness of Rappaccini's effort in his tender presentation of the carefully cultivated flowers. Through this imitative gesture, Hawthorne implies a gentle criticism of Giovanni's foolishness and a contrasted appreciation of Rappaccini's mature and tempered enthusiasm.

As a critic of Rappaccini, then, Giovanni's limited understanding of the old doctor's concerns make it im-
possible for the younger man to identify with Rappaccini's deliberation and concerns for the future. Further, since Rappaccini's efforts would discipline Beatrice's abandon attractive to Giovanni, he views Rappaccini as a threat, even before he learns of the strange immunization of Beatrice. As Giovanni treasures Beatrice's irresponsibility, Pietro Baglioni values his own professional status. Unlike Giovanni, Baglioni does understand the requirements of scientific endeavor, but he cannot remain objective in his analysis of Rappaccini because Rappaccini's practices threaten his security.

In a series of characterizing gestures, Hawthorne establishes the concerns which limit Baglioni's view. His attitude toward Beatrice is prejudiced and narrowed by his real concern that she might usurp him professionally. Baglioni is concerned about the high esteem of the profession for Rappaccini but he attaches as much importance to the potential challenge by the young apprentice as he does to her father and instructor. Baglioni warns Giovanni that Rappaccini has "instructed [Beatrice] deeply in his science, and . . . she is already qualified to fill a professor's chair" (101). Although he dismisses the idea with "other absurd rumors," Baglioni illustrates his concern in a fable by an "old classic author" (117). He alludes to the mixture of youthful beauty and science as he attempts to picture the ridiculous practice which would
result from the realization of his fears: "Doubtless, likewise, the fair and learned Signora Beatrice would minister to her patients with draughts as sweet as a maiden's breath" (118). While insisting that he jests, Baglioni frequently returns to the troublesome thought betraying his real concern.

His worries also include the danger implicit in Rappaccini's unfair advantage. Since Beatrice might entice the promising student away from Baglioni into the instruction of Rappaccini, Baglioni's fears are compounded. The fable which Baglioni tells to Giovanni is an attempt to forestall either disaster. First, it is an attempt to convince Giovanni that fear of the hidden powers of beautiful women is authorized in antiquity. In addition, the story introduces roles by which Giovanni and Baglioni might foil Rappaccini's supposed plan. The role of "youthful conquerer" suggested for Giovanni gives the youth a sense of purpose when he brings the potion to Beatrice. When he assures her that it was prescribed by a "wise physician" he places Baglioni in the heroic role reserved for the old doctor in the fable (117,126). Thus Hawthorne reveals Baglioni's view that Rappaccini's program of education for his daughter is unnatural. The view makes objective evaluation of the final scene impossible for the troubled Baglioni.

This interpretive prejudice motivates Baglioni's re-
sponse to the final scene. It is Baglioni who summarizes and moralizes the conclusion with his accusatory question. In his attention to Rappaccini's experiment, Baglioni might refer to either Rappaccini's education of Beatrice or to his immunization of the young woman. Baglioni explains earlier that the only rumor "worth talking about, or listening to" is the training of Beatrice (101). Baglioni considers this practice as the most threatening of Rappaccini's experiments. Rappaccini, on the other hand, has considered no alternative. As a parental obligation and a scientific responsibility, the instruction of Beatrice occupies Rappaccini's energies. Since he has not been troubled with any alternative consideration, Rappaccini is surprised at Beatrice's ingratitude. But Baglioni's observation portrays the destruction of Beatrice as the logical consequence of Rappaccini's unnatural practice. And the "experiment" to which he refers is, most likely, that education of a young woman which is so foreign and frightening to Baglioni.

Baglioni's final question, however, also betrays a certain sympathy for Rappaccini's dilemma. Baglioni responds to Beatrice's death "in a tone of triumph mixed with horror" (128). The triumph of self-righteousness mixes, then, with the horror of recognition. Baglioni has been evidence of Rappaccini's failure. And that failure, culminating in Beatrice's death, focuses critical atten-
tion not on Rappaccini's superior science but on his meager understanding.

During his final speeches, Rappaccini reveals his own character as assured scientist and as enlightened parent. Beatrice's tirade changes Rappaccini's attitude from profound triumph to bewildered questioning. The shattered man had used "conscious power" to achieve the upright posture appropriate to his pronouncement (126). In this noble attempt at a final gesture of strength, the aging Rappaccini proclaims the success of his intellectual efforts. As if to graduate the young couple as his students, he invites Giovanni and Beatrice to "pass on, then, through the world" (127). But his proud statement elicits, instead of the expected gratitude, a feeble but bitter attack by Beatrice (127). Finding that her father's "marvelous gifts" offend Giovanni, Beatrice calls her inheritance a "miserable doom." Incapable of understanding her preference for powerlessness, Rappaccini is reduced to retrospective consideration of Beatrice's alternatives; he has missed the point of her objection. But, contrary to critical assertion that his heart cannot be touched, he does experience the despair of failure to understand and failure to be understood.

Rappaccini's oversight may have resulted from his conviction that a sympathetic friend like Giovanni could be enticed into a similar power. Whether through over-
sight or indifference, however, Rappaccini's failure to consider Beatrice's wishes in deciding to educate her and to immunize her, earn for him his daughter's violent ingratitude. His total disbelief indicates that both his limited understanding and his scientific efforts have been, to him, morally unquestionable. His achievements and his mistakes result, not from some abnormal zeal or incapacity to relate, but from sincere efforts thwarted by his own limited understanding and by the fears and thoughtless actions of his detractors.

An historical parallel to Hawthorne's story demonstrates the reality of the intellectual climate in which men like Rappaccini worked. Oliver Wendell Holmes describes the reactions in Boston when, in 1721, "Zabdiel Boylston . . . inoculated his only son for small pox." Cotton Mather championed the practice and his stand earned him the disdain of the medical profession and the public. A citizen even threw a hand grenade through Mathers's window. Holmes's recollection prompts him to announce that "the Reverend Mather was right this time, and the irreverent doctors who laughed at him were wrong." Holmes advises detractors to "Set this good hint of Cotton Mather "against his recommendations for the

identification of witches. Experimentation with immunization and immunization on one's own family were historical facts as was the evidence of a vocally unsympathetic public.

Holmes might have meant his defense of Mather to improve the valuations of scientists who, like Baglioni, believed that the scientist "should receive little credit for such occasional instances of success—they being probably the work of chance—but should be held strictly accountable for his failures, which may justly be considered his own work." (100). Readers have long taken this decidedly unsympathetic view toward Rappaccini as Hawthorne's own. Hawthorne portrayed Baglioni's attitude as valid, and it was, in fact, a real—perhaps prevalent—view. It does not, however, appear to be the attitude of the author.
Conclusion

Occupational Hazards of the Physician as Citizen

A persistent authorial whisper counters the narrative clamor to condemn Hawthorne's physicians. Through personally and socially prescribed stereotypes, the narrative focus on the dramatic manifestations of the physician's character ignores the ordinary characteristics which enable him to relate as a human being. Far from defining the physicians, the popular views reveal the social environment wherein legends and fantasies assign motives to imagined eccentricities of those physicians. Although character complexity is sometimes ignored by the prevalent views in the tale, Hawthorne's technique insures a fuller view of that complexity.

In his early tale of "The Haunted Quack," the complexity of relationships is rather obviously suggested by the doubling technique. Muting distinctions on which the quack's self-condemnation depends, Hawthorne allows consideration of a shared guilt. In another tale, he refers to the appetites which motivate patients to patronize known frauds; in "Feathertop," Mother Rigby explains to her scarecrow-son:
Stick to thy pipe, I say! Smoke, puff, blow thy cloud; and tell the people, if any question be made, that it is for thy health, and that so the physician orders thee to do.¹

And the doctor’s cooperation is no more condemned in "Feathertop" than that of the self-deceptive patient. And, while Hippocrates Jenkins insists on claiming full blame, Hawthorne portrays both participants in the pseudoprofessional relationship.

Nor does Hawthorne allow the narrator of the more familiar "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment" to present a lopsided case against Heidegger. Hawthorne’s concern with the patients is specific. He portrays them individually, not as four victims of a dispassionate doctor-friend. Hawthorne’s interest in the attitudes and actions of the elderly are also evident in "The Christmas Banquet," where two of the guests resemble Heidegger’s friends. One, an old clergyman, is "yielding to the speculative tendency of the age . . . and wandered into a cloud region, where everything was misty and deceptive." Another, Mr. Smith,

burst into precisely the fit of laughter which his physicians had warned him against, as likely to prove instantaneously fatal. . . . This catastrophe, of course, broke up the festival.²


Heidegger's friends, too, meet his encouragement, first with lethargy, then with hysteria. Legend implies that Heidegger amuses himself by observing the foursome; but Hawthorne's concern for the difficult treatment of reluctant and intemperate patients would suggest that Heidegger's profession requires such observant detachment.

Nor are the suspicions of the narrator in the richer tale, "The Birth-mark," the exclusive response to Aylmer's character. Hawthorne's portrait of a married physician suggests his interest in the unique quality of marriage to support a fluctuating ego. In "The Great Carbuncle," Hawthorne tells of Hannah and Matthew, "the simple pair, who seemed strangely out of place among the whimsical fraternity whose wits had been set agog by the Great Carbuncle." No more dazzled by the Great Carbuncle than Georgiana and Aylmer by the society which deifies science, Hannah and Matthew also offer encouragement to each other. Hawthorne explains the alternation whereby the timid partner first receives, then offers encouragement. He applauds the cooperative effort: "It was a sweet emblem of conjugal affection, as they toiled up the difficult ascent, gathering strength from the mutual aid which they afforded." ³ Although Georgiana's death offers dramatic appeal, to focus

on it is to underestimate dramatic interchanges through which Hawthorne portrays the ordinary relationship. And it is this relationship which actually motivates the action of the tale.

The foibles of villagers, the treatment of reluctant old friends, and the interaction between spouses are not, however, the central issues of the doctor stories. Hawthorne portrays doctors, doctors whose major concern is the treatment of disease. The most complex of the doctor-stories, "Rappaccini's Daughter," focuses on that almost obsessional concern with disease. But, it sets the tale in an atmosphere wherein everyone is concerned with the possible contamination of the air. The concern is not simply a vehicle to vilify Rappaccini. The threat of contagion excites fears. Consider the tale of "Lady Eleanor's Mantle," which portrays an entire town fearful of the "tainted air over the door of every dwelling into which the Small Pox had entered." Dr. Clarke's "sad profession" requires that he tell Jervase Helwyze that Lady Eleanor's "breath has filled the air with poison . . . that she has shaken pestilence and death upon the land." Hawthorne conveys not only the spread of disease, but also the spread of its associated rumors. Of one horror of the pestilence, he says: "This dark tale, whispered at first, was now bruited far and
The physician's profession involves him in both epidemics, the spread of disease and of rumor. And Rappaccini is as skilled in controlling the former as he is helpless to control the latter.

Certainly, irresponsible practitioners and real villains could inspire Hawthorne's tales. His own experiences might have narrowed his sympathies towards physicians. But his art does not suffer from either his inspiration or his experience. Rather, it gains as Hawthorne portrays the complex attitudes which experience inspires. To ignore these complexities is to ignore the Hawthorne achievement.

Bibliography


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Vita

Mary Sauter Comfort, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William P. Sauter, was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on October 27, 1942. She graduated from Lower Moreland High School, Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania, in 1960 and received a Bachelor of Science Degree in 1964 from Pennsylvania State University. She taught English in high schools in Johnstown and Northampton, Pennsylvania. She is presently a teaching assistant in the English Department at Lehigh University.