

# The Uncanny in the Themes of Evil, Transgression and the Double in Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Rappaccini's Daughter"

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## RESUMEN

El propósito de este artículo consiste en explorar los mecanismos y representaciones de lo siniestro en "La hija de Rappacci" de Nathaniel Hawthorne como expresión del mal dentro de los límites del género gótico del siglo XIX; como expresión del tema del doble en tres personajes humanos y en uno no humano que aparecen en el cuento; y como expresión de transgresión en el personaje principal, Giovanni Guasconte. El concepto de lo siniestro que se usará será el de la teoría psicoanalítica, siguiendo especialmente los aportes de Sigmund Freud y Jacques Lacan.

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to explore the mechanisms and representations of the uncanny in Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Rappaccini's Daughter" as an expression of evil within nineteenth century Gothic boundaries; as an expression of the theme of the double in three human characters and in one non-human component of Rappaccini's garden; and as an expression of transgression in Giovanni Guasconte, the main character. The concept of the uncanny to be used will be that of psychoanalytic theory, especially reliant on the contributions on the topic by Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan.

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**Palabras clave:** Hawthorne, siniestro, doble, psicoanálisis, literatura estadounidense

**Keywords:** Hawthorne, uncanny, double, psychoanalysis, U.S. literature

In his seminal 1919 article entitled “*Das Unheimliche*,” Sigmund Freud, through an innovative analysis of E.T.A. Hoffman’s 1815 classic horror story “The Sandman,” laid the basis for the concept of the uncanny in psychoanalytic theory, as well as its repercussions in clinical practice and in the field of the aesthetics. Freud used Hoffmann’s story to attempt to construct the concept of the *unheimlich*, which, if translated literally from German to English, would come out as something like the “un-homely;” in other words, that which is not homely, but which, at the same time, is related to the homely and involves something familiar in its nature. The “uncanny”—the equivalent English word Freudian translators have found for *unheimlich*—is, according to Freud, a variety of that which is terrifying and which can be traced way back in time in the unconscious of the subject.<sup>2</sup> In other words, the *unheimlich* is a derivation of something familiar to the individual, and that, at the same time, causes a feeling of strangeness and even horror when triggered. In addition to these features, Freud states that the uncanny is something that has been destined to remain secret, yet that, for some particular reasons, comes to light and causes disturbances on the subject, as well as feelings of horror and anxiety.<sup>3</sup>

Following Freud’s ideas in “*Das Unheimliche*,” Max Milner, in his book *La fantasmagorie*, states the contradictions that can be found in the concept of the *unheimlich*.<sup>4</sup> He points out that the concept itself involves, for the subject who experiences it, a strange and uncommon impression that emerges in the subject’s psychic life and disturbs it.

2 Sigmund Freud, *Obras Completas. Vol. 17* (Buenos Aires: Amorortu, 1996) 220.

3 Freud, 227.

4 Max Milner, *La Fantasmagorie* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1982) 38.

The impression that appears before the subject seems to be something never before acknowledged; however, the impression itself is also familiar to the individual, and the feeling of strangeness encountered at the moment of the impression seems so to the subject because he has repressed it in order to function compatibly in his society. This is why, Milner points out, the *unheimlich* is that which is meant to remain secret, but that, through randomly triggered circumstances, emerges onto the individual's everyday psychic reality and distresses it.

Very much in accordance with Freud and Milner, Roland Chemana's *Dictionary of Psychoanalysis* defines the uncanny as a feeling of strangeness and uneasiness caused by someone or something that, in spite of prompting these uncomfortable feelings, was previously very familiar to the subject who experiences the phenomenon of the *unheimlich*.<sup>5</sup> This definition of the uncanny by Chemana would, in a way, take us closer to Jacques Lacan's interpretation of this phenomenon which, in his view, is rather synchronic and not diachronic as Freud sees it. In other words, for Lacan, the uncanny is a feeling of strangeness that does not necessarily remind the subject of a repressed past event, but that takes him closer to the object, which is what his life and death instincts look for and what gives meaning to his life, yet that at the same time, must remain unreachable for the subject if he wants to keep his sanity and even his own life.<sup>6</sup> Chemana also states that the apparition of the feeling of the uncanny is particularly strong and frequent wherever and whenever what psychoanalytic theory calls "imaginary duplication," or what we would refer to as the theme of the double, appears.<sup>7</sup> In his analysis of Hoffman's "The Sandman," Freud explores the theme of the double and the uncanny in the characters of Coppelius, the lawyer who always provoked deep feelings of horror in

5 Roland Chemana, *Diccionario del psicoanálisis* (Buenos Aires: Amorrortu, 1998) 413.

6 Lacan extensively deals with this topic in his third seminar entitled "The Psychoses" (1956-57). See Jacques Alain Miller's version (Barcelona: Paidós, 1984). Elí Morales discusses Lacan's perspective on the relationship between the subject and the object in his book *Sujeto y estructura: Lacan, psicoanálisis y modernidad* (México: Ediciones de la Noche, 1997) 209.

7 Chemana, 413.

Nathanael, the main character of the story, during his childhood, and who apparently caused Nathanael father's death, and Coppola, a barometer seller who, by appearing in Nathanael's later life, unchains all the terrifying repressed feelings the lawyer had provoked in him as a child, and that, in the end, will cause Nathanael's own destruction. In other words, the theme of the double in the *unheimlich* would have the function of personifying and triggering the feelings of strangeness and anxiety of the character who experiences the uncanny or to represent similar positions and values in the two characters that stand for the double, in the case of "The Sandman," Coppelius and Coppola.

Víctor Bravo, in his book *La irrupción y el límite*, apart from pointing out the theme of the double as one of the esthetic expressions of the *unheimlich*, and coinciding somewhat with Freud's and Milner's ideas on this particular component of the concept of the uncanny, also posits the expression of evil and transgression as two quintessential elements of this phenomenon.<sup>8</sup> Regarding evil, he links this element with horror. In this sense, the horror of the uncanny in literature is a clear representation of the disturbing and annihilating nature of evil.<sup>9</sup> He links the horror of fantastic and Gothic literature to the notion of evil and to its representation. He states that the experience of horror in characters of fantastic literature is unbearable beyond the moment of its appearance, and a possible permanence of extreme horror beyond that moment would represent the annihilation of the character; this is what happens to Nathanael in "The Sandman."<sup>10</sup> In regards to transgression and the *unheimlich*, Bravo states that it occurs when something from the outside floods the tranquility of a predictable phenomenon and disturbs its balance and makes the *unheimlich* spring out of this irruption.<sup>11</sup> We must not forget, however, that this "outside" phenomenon is, at the same time, part of the internal structure of the

8 Víctor Bravo. *La irrupción y el límite* (México, D.F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1998) 37.

9 Bravo, 41.

10 Bravo, 43.

11 Bravo, 17.

“predictable phenomenon” and, as a consequence, part of what is known and what can be considered the “homely.” In Hoffmann’s “The Sandman,” Nathanael transgresses his psychic balance and is lost to the devices of his own repressed horrors and fears when Coppola irrupts in his adult life and reminds him of the horrifying Coppelius of his childhood and all the repressed feelings he had from that period of his life. Transgression as an element of the uncanny, as defined by Bravo, is associated with the transgression that pervades fantastic, and more specifically, Gothic literature as defined by Fred Botting. Botting states that the transgression present on Gothic literature such as “The Sandman” dims the definition of reality and most important, activates a sense of the unknown and a threat to coherence and order.<sup>12</sup> The activation of the sense of the unknown, as Botting states it, would remind us of Bravo’s definition of transgression as an expression of the uncanny.

### **The Uncanny and “Rappaccini’s Daughter”**

Having defined the concept of the uncanny, its nature and its function as expression of evil, transgression, and the theme of the double, we may address its role in nineteenth century Gothic literature, to which Nathaniel Hawthorne’s fiction belongs. In the case of the expression of evil, this literature often incarnated evil in madmen, criminals, unstable characters with double personalities, or demented scientists<sup>13</sup> such as professor Rappaccini. These characters and the evil they stood for were commonly associated with technological advances of scientific studies and the sometimes sinister possibilities that these advances represented and that frequently were part of the fears and anxieties of general epistemic world visions of the time. In other words, one of the possible representations of evil as an expression of the uncanny might well have been science and its sometimes sinister

12 Fred Botting, *Gothic* (London: Routledge, 1997) 2.

13 Botting, 3.

consequences for the characters affected by it negatively. The incarnations of evil from the scientific perspective in nineteenth century Gothic fiction were the scientists and professors who pursued the sometimes bizarre studies on the possibilities of scientific, rational knowledge. In “The Sandman,” for instance, we can see that all the characters associated with science—Coppelius, Coppola, and Spalanzini—are highly uncanny characters provoke disturbing and tormenting uncanny feelings in Nathanael. In the case of “Rappaccini’s Daughter,” Professor Rappaccini and Baglioni are highly skilled scientists of an uncanny and sinister nature who cause distress, in the name of scientific progress, and later on, the destruction of Beatrice and Giovanni, the other two characters appearing in the story.

In the case of the theme of the double as an element of the *unheimlich* in nineteenth century Gothic literature in general, and in the specific case of “Rappaccini’s Daughter,” it is important to notice that in most cases, as stated above, it is represented by two characters apparently distinguishable from each other, but who, in the end, cause the same reactions and consequences in another given character. Whereas the characters appearing as doubles might seem very different from each other at first sight, when studied in detail, it is quite possible to find similar connotations and values among them. In “Rappaccini’s Daughter,” for instance, Rappaccini himself and professor Baglioni embody this theme, and though they apparently stand for different sets of values and traits, in the end they will disclose similar characteristics that will reveal their uncanny nature and the deadly and disastrous consequences this nature has on both Giovanni and Beatrice. Finally, in regards to transgression and the *unheimlich*, it is the irruption of Rappaccini’s garden and the deadly components of it, including Beatrice herself, in Giovanni’s life, what will lead all the uncanny elements present in the story, as well as its uncanny denouement.

## The Uncanny and the Theme of Evil

Professor Giacomo Rappaccini stands as the most evident representation of evil in “Rappaccini’s Daughter.” To begin with, his persona, as described by the narrator, radiates an atmosphere of strangeness in which his character is determined by the intermingling of familiar and unfamiliar as well as contradictory aspects. From the very beginning of the story we become acquainted with him:

a tall, emaciated, sallow, and sickly looking man [who] . . . was beyond the middle term of his life, with gray hair, a thin, gray beard, and a face singularly marked with intellect and cultivation, but which could never, even in his more youthful days, have expressed a warmth of heart.<sup>14</sup>

In this description, Rappaccini appears strange and ominous. Although most of the adjectives describing him in this passage could be considered normal and appropriate to characterize a scholar of his age, the absence of “warmth of heart” is something that reveals his strangeness and his alienation from the standard norms of his society. A few lines after the description of Rappaccini, Giovanni, from his window, observes the scientist for the first time as he deals with the deadly vegetation of his garden: “It was strangely frightful to the young man’s imagination to see the air of insecurity in the person [Rappaccini] cultivating the garden, that most simple and innocent of human toils, and which had been alike the joy and labor of the unfallen parents of the race” (115). From this moment on, Rappaccini will intrigue the young student and will stand, for him, as the most preponderant element that triggers sinister feelings and uncanny thoughts. The strange science of Professor Rappaccini will be the tool

<sup>14</sup> Nathaniel Hawthorne, “Rappaccini’s Daughter,” *Selected Short Stories of Nathaniel Hawthorne* (Greenwich, CN: Fawcett, 1966) 115. The following page numbers of quotations from “Rappaccini’s Daughter will be indicated in the text itself.

through which—as in many other nineteenth century Gothic tales—evil will be projected. According to Baglioni’s account, Rappaccini is “a man who cares infinitely more for science than for mankind.... He would sacrifice human life, his own among the rest, or whatever else was dearest to him, for the sake of adding so much as a grain of mustard to the great heap of his accumulated knowledge” (118). This description of Rappaccini by Baglioni, apart from helping characterize even more the sinister personality of the owner of the garden, helps to confirm the fearful reactions that Rappaccini has already awakened in Giovanni, while building up the image of evil that, from this point on, Rappaccini will stand for in Giovanni’s existence, and as a powerful character, in the plot of the story in general.

In the first direct encounter that both Giovanni and Rappaccini have with each other under the sharp vigilance of Baglioni, we can see how professor Rappaccini is described as a man “with a face all overspread with a most sickly and sallow hue, but yet so pervaded with an expression of piercing and active intellect that an observer might have overlooked the merely physical attributes and have seen only this wonderful energy” (123). As he passes next to both Baglioni and Giovanni, he exchanges a cold salutation with the former but “fix[es] his eyes upon Giovanni with an intentness that seemed to bring out whatever was within him worthy of notice” (123). Once more, in these two quotations it is possible to notice the strangeness and ambivalence of Rappaccini. The somehow aging scholar coexists with an obscure and potent force that projects an evil energy upon whomever he desires. By fixing his sharp gaze on Giovanni, the professor chooses him as the next subject of his experiment, and his evil and dehumanized science will be focused, from this moment on, on Giovanni as his next victim. The frightful feelings the young student experienced during his first visual encounter with Rappaccini in the garden are now confirmed in the first face-to-face encounter, and later on, in the consequences of such intromission. Rappaccini’s look on Giovanni, “as deep as Nature itself, but without Nature’s warmth of love” (124),

will soon claim its prize in the young man's life and the life of the one he loves.

### **The Uncanny and the Theme of Transgression**

Having delimited the representation of evil as an uncanny force in the story, it is now possible to focus on the nature of transgression and the actions Giovanni undertakes in order to enter the dominions of Professor Rappaccini. In regards to transgression, Rappaccini's daughter and the garden itself stand for "the other" realm as opposed to the conventional existence of the newcomer student. The excess and exuberance of Rappaccini's garden are in clear opposition to the shabby room Giovanni inhabits in his new lodgings. The garden below Giovanni's window has all the characteristics of what is uncanny and of what causes uncanny emotions. It is a place apparently like "one of those botanic gardens which were of earlier date in Padua" (114). It also possesses, however, a fountain "sculptured with rare art, but so woefully shattered that it was impossible to trace the original design from the chaos of remaining fragments" (114). There is, in this first description of the components of the garden, something unfamiliar within the familiar. This unfamiliarity found in the fountain of Rappaccini's garden puzzles Giovanni's imagination and begins, in a very subtle way at first, to unravel all the ominous feelings the garden will cause him.

The plants and their magnificent leaves and beautiful flowers also awaken, in Giovanni's imagination, a whole myriad of strange feelings and suspicions that seem to pervade his mind even more than the apparent beauty of the garden does. On the one hand, in his view, the garden is full of "various plants ... with gigantic leaves, and in some instance, flowers gorgeously magnificent" (114). However, some plants "crept serpent-like along the ground or climbed on high, using whatever means of ascent was offered them" (114). The apparent

beauty of the plants hides something strange and omnipotent in their own nature. The plants use, as the narrator states it, “whatever means” to creep, get closer, and attack the onlooker at the window. The beauty of the plants of the garden hides the deadly substance of which they are composed, and Giovanni seems to perceive this fact as he first watches Rappaccini busy himself with the fatal creatures. The fact that Rappaccini wears a mask and gloves to administer attention to some of the plants makes Giovanni think of the possibility that “all this beauty did but conceal a deadlier malice” (115).

Beatrice also contributes to Giovanni’s transition from his reality as a newcomer student in Padua to the complex realm of the garden, and which, in the end, will become his own damnation. The young girl, who is always arrayed “with as much richness of taste as the most splendid of the flowers, beautiful as the day, and with a bloom so deep and vivid that one shade more would have been too much” (116), and for whom “all men in Padua are wild about, even though not half a dozen have ever had the good hap to see her face” (119) also awakens sentiments of strangeness, and even horror, due to her uncanny nature and peculiar characteristics in addition to her physical attractiveness. While her father manipulates the deadly plants of the garden in a most careful way wearing a mask and gloves in order to avoid direct contact, she even takes deep breaths of the fragrances of the flowers as if enjoying the dreadful transpiration of the plants: “As Beatrice came down ... it was observable that she handled and inhaled the odor of several of the plants which her father had so sedulously avoided” (116). This element of familiarity with poisonous plants creates the aura of the uncanny around Beatrice. From this moment on, we become suspicious of the fact that there must be something more in her nature beyond her obvious beauty. Giovanni registers the uncanny nature of the girl when he dreams, during a nap after the first visual encounter with Beatrice, of “a rich flower and a beautiful girl” (117) and the nature of them both, and that “flower and maiden were different, and yet the same, fraught with some strange peril in either

shape” (117). The visions manifested in the dream will later on be confirmed by the lizard and the insect incidents. In these incidents the moisture of a broken flower from the garden falls upon a lizard and extinguishes its life, and some moments later, the atmosphere of Beatrice’s breath kills a flying insect while Giovanni stands by his window witnessing the whole event. Moments before the incidents occur, Beatrice is taking care of one of the plants of the garden so meticulously that, in Giovanni’s view, there seemed to be “an analogy between the beautiful girl and the gorgeous shrub” (120). Once he witnesses how the lizard has perished, horror invades him and the feeling of the uncanny pervades his thoughts in regards to Beatrice: “‘Am I awake? Have I my senses?’ said he to himself ‘What is this being? Beautiful shall I call her, or inexpressibly terrible?’” (121) The “un-homely” in the “homely” is manifested in Beatrice. The next step for Giovanni will be to be embraced by the attractive, yet at the same time harrowing temptation.

Giovanni’s moving from his everyday reality to the mysterious realm of the garden stands for the deed of the uncanny transgression itself. His landlady guides him through the secret passage that leads to the garden, and his first interview with Beatrice unleashes mysterious events that will lead to his transformation and doom. Giovanni’s desire to be in the garden with beautiful Beatrice begins to become obsessive as he continues to visit her. Even though by this time he is already aware of the strangeness in Beatrice as a companion, and most importantly, as a possible lover, the strangeness itself prompts him to go on with his visits and his increasing attachment to the girl: “The instant he was aware of the possibility of approaching Beatrice, it seemed an absolute necessity of his existence to do so. It mattered not whether she were angel or demon, he was irrevocably within her sphere” (124). Little by little, the concerns about Beatrice’s nature that haunted him at first begin to dissipate. As the visits become more frequent and Beatrice and Giovanni become closer, the young man begins to experience the terrible metamorphosis of the garden more

directly. As the days go by, “whatever looked ugly [about the nature of the garden and Beatrice] was now beautiful: or, if incapable of such change, it stole away and hid itself among those shapeless half-ideas which throng the dim region beyond the daylight of our perfect consciousness” (129). With this and some other feats, such as killing the spider to test whether his breath was as poisonous as Beatrice’s, he confirms the terrible reality of his transformation. He even acknowledges, when looking at the mirror, that his own image has become strange even to himself. As he gazes at his own face and confirms that the handsomeness of the “beautiful young man” (134) is also accompanied by a “token of a certain shallowness of some feeling of insincerity of character” (134), he realizes, to his own horror, that this metamorphosis has become an irreversible fact, and that his own persona has become unfamiliar even for himself.

Once Giovanni recognizes that he has become as deadly as Beatrice, he will try, even though vainly, to recover his previous state, and at the same time to rescue his beloved from the control of the science of her devilish father. The antidote Baglioni proposes will be the last resource he will attempt to use in order to return to the normality of his previous world; however, as later events in the story will corroborate, this is impossible because his terrible transformation is irreversible and irrevocable. He naively believes that the antidote will reestablish normality, without knowing, as the narrator well puts it, that “as poison had been life [to Beatrice, and now to himself], so the powerful antidote as death” (139). Giovanni’s transgression of the order of the garden and of the order of his own life costs innocent Beatrice her own life, and with it, Giovanni’s own balance and purpose in his existence, which he had turned into devotion for Beatrice. Knowing that the sinister qualities of his own person are irreversible, and that the only remedy, as in Beatrice’s case, is death itself, Giovanni is doomed to share his suffering with no one but himself, now turned into an unhappy subject of Rappaccini’s science. The world of professor Rappaccini has irrupted through Giovanni’s window and will never leave the young man alone again.

## The Uncanny and the Theme of the Double

The last theme to be addressed here is that of the double and its uncanny nature in “Rappaccini’s Daughter.” There are four characters in the story that personify this topic: Rappaccini and Baglioni; and Beatrice and her sister, the shrub she loves and cares for so much. The first suspicion we get from the story of the fact that there is a double uncanny representation in Beatrice and the deadly shrub comes from the narrator’s remark of the plant as “wreathed itself around a statue of Vertumnus” (114). Vertumnus is a Roman god associated with the idea of change. To him was attributed the ability to take on as many forms as he wished.<sup>15</sup> This intertextual element lets us know the fact that there is a very close connection between Beatrice and the plant, and that both of them, although appearing to be very different from each other, are one in characteristics and attributes. This thesis is confirmed later on when Giovanni sees Beatrice for the first time. When his eyes first fall upon her, he, not knowing why, thinks of “deep hues of purple or crimson and perfumes heavily detectable” (116). These recurrent colors and this strange fragrance are nothing but those of the most beautiful and poisonous shrub in the garden which Beatrice calls her sister. As described before by the narrator, this magnificently strange plant “bore a profusion of purple blossoms, each of which had the luster or richness of a gem” (115). In addition, as mentioned on several occasions during the development of the story, Beatrice also transpires, through her deadly breath, a very particular odor almost undistinguishable from that of a strange shrub. When perceiving the odor of the plant once he has come to the garden, Giovanni recognizes the fragrance as “identical with that which he had attributed to Beatrice’s breath” (128). Later on, when watching Beatrice take care of the plant, Giovanni “almost doubted whether it were girl tending her favorite flower, or one sister performing the duties of affection to

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15 Pierre Grimal, *Dictionary of Classical Mythology* (London: Penguin, 1990) 450.

another” (116). The connection existing between the venomous plant and the beautiful girl, is, thus, more than evident. Giovanni, through the experience of an uncanny feeling, senses this connection, and the presence of either of the two, Beatrice or the plant, will trigger in him the memory of the other. Even Beatrice herself will later recognize this sister-like relationship which she has with the plant: “I grew up and blossomed with the plant and was nourished with its breath. It was my sister and I loved her with human affection, for alas!—has thou not suspected?—there was an awful doom” (136). The beauty of the girl is the poison of the plant.

Professor Rappaccini and Baglioni, on the other hand, incarnate two even more dreadful and sinister doubles than Beatrice and the plant. Once Rappaccini has been characterized as a dehumanized scientist by Baglioni, Baglioni posits himself as the opposite to Rappaccini. He deplors Rappaccini’s science for despising sentiments and even the life of the subjects of his experiments. Rappaccini is, in Baglioni’s view, a person “who might . . . chance hold [Giovanni’s] life and death in his hands” (118). Later on, once Giovanni has realized his tragic state and the deadly characteristics he has acquired, Baglioni emerges as his apparent savior and provides him with the remedy that supposedly liberates both Giovanni and Beatrice from the monstrous grip of Rappaccini. Baglioni affirms that once Beatrice drinks a single sip of his formula she will again be “within the limits of ordinary nature, from which her father’s madness has estranged her” (133). However, although Baglioni claims over and over again to be the opposite of Beatrice’s father and accuses him for “offering up his child in this horrible manner as the victim of his insane zeal of science,” (133) the horrifying denouement of the story confirms that there is no essential difference between Baglioni and Rappaccini, and that Giovanni and his now assassinated lover have been nothing but the battleground in the scientific warfare between the two professors. At the end of the story, Baglioni appears omnipotent and fearsome as Rappaccini himself to proclaim his victory over Rappaccini at the

expense of Beatrice's life. He "looked forth from the window, and called loudly, in a tone of triumph mixed with horror, to the thunder-stricken man of science — 'Rappaccini! Rappaccini! And is *this* the upshot of your experiment!'" (140). Once more, the homely and the 'un-homely' go together in this closing statement: triumph mixed with horror; the righteous professor converted, in a matter of seconds, to a figure as dreadful and malign as Rappaccini himself; the benevolent old advisor who was even a friend of Giovanni's father turned into a knowledge-thirsty madman who, in the best style of Rappaccini, is willing to sacrifice human life in order to prove himself the most skilful scientist in Padua.

The uncanny pervades "Rappaccini's Daughter" so much that every element in the story that is important and that has relevance in its thematic outcome is highly linked to this phenomenon: to the "un-homely" within the boundaries of the homely, to death immersed in beauty, to imminent danger in the midst of exuberance, to evil in advances of technology, to horror and perdition in transgression, to defeat in triumph, to fatality in love. Mystery springs out of every action in "Rappaccini's Daughter" as also occurs in most of Hawthorne's fantastic short stories. This element emerges and reigns in a fiction in which even the Devil himself, as in "Young Goodman Brown" tells his audience that "Evil is the nature of mankind. Evil must be your only happiness."<sup>16</sup> "Rappaccini's Daughter" is, after all, a stage where the forces of obscurity transgress daylight reality and cause it to intermingle in a sinister dance in which everything is possible and every single element, however ordinary it may seem to be—a beautiful shrub, an old man tending a garden, a gorgeous young lady tending the beautiful purple blossoms of an exotic plant, or an old friend of your own father—may invade your own ordinary perception and turn it into something different, something strange, something *unheimlich*.

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16 Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Young Goodman Brown," *Selected Short Stories of Nathaniel Hawthorne* (Greenwich, CN: Fawcett, 1966) 110.