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UNITY AND DUALITY IN "RAPPACCINNI'S DAUGHTER"  
AND "THE BIRTHMARK"

by

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## CHAPTER I

### TRADITION AND HISTORY OF UNITY AND DUALITY

The idea of unity and duality in man has, for centuries, been a fascinating topic of study. Since this basis of tension exists in man himself, it is natural for the idea to appear in his literature. Although man may be mystified by its effects and presence, he often searches for an explanation of human behavior influenced by this stress. Traditionally, the term unity, one, is often related to God, harmony, and peace. Conversely, the term duality, two, is related to the devil, discord, and confusion. These associations are applicable to this thesis, the objective of which is to examine the effect of duality in two of Nathaniel Hawthorne's short stories: "Rappaccini's Daughter" and "The Birthmark."

The subject is worthy of investigation because several literary elements are affected by this problem. The delineation of characters, narrative structure, and ultimate tone of the pieces are all affected by the age-old problem of duality. Although these two stories can be and have been analyzed from different points of view, the problem of duality

is an unexplored basis for an explanation of action, character, tone, and conclusion observable in them.

Before plunging directly into the two stories themselves, a reader will profit by a review of some early ideas on the terms unity and duality. To consider the prominence of these concepts in such writings on numerology and pseudo-science as Hawthorne is known to have read is to understand both his acquaintance with these ideas and why he utilized them to develop his stories. To observe effects achieved by other writers of belles lettres is to have insight into effects which can be achieved when an author makes these concepts a formative influence upon his writing.

Traditionally and historically man has always been concerned with duality, especially duality in himself. Since the time of Plato, the dual aspects of human nature have been recognized, and men have delved into the subject. Since man is composed of both spiritual and material qualities or elements, he has constantly been engaged in an inner conflict between claims of these two. In accordance with the Platonic idea, the physical existence of man is created when the four essences, earth, air, water, and fire join with the quintessence, the spirit or form. Plato aptly expresses the effects of this union in his dialogue

with Phaedrus in the figure of the chariot pulled by two horses. The passage reads as follows:

Of the nature of the soul, though her true form be ever a theme of large and more than mortal discourse, let me speak briefly, and in a figure. And let the figure be composite--a pair of winged horses and a charioteer. Now the winged horses and the charioteers of the gods are all of them noble and of noble descent, but those of other races are mixed; the human charioteer drives his in a pair; and one of them is noble and of noble breed, and the other is ignoble and of ignoble breed; and the driving of them of necessity gives a great deal of trouble to him. I will endeavour to explain to you in what way the mortal differs from the immortal creature. The soul in her totality has the care of inanimate being everywhere, and traverses the whole heaven in diverse forms appearing:--when perfect and fully winged she soars upward, and orders the whole world; whereas the imperfect soul, losing her wings and drooping in her flight at last settles on the solid ground--there, finding a home, she receives an earthly frame which appears to be self-moved, but is really moved by her power; and this composition of soul and body is called a living and mortal creature. For immortal no such union can be reasonably believed to be; although fancy, not having seen nor surely known the nature of God, may imagine an immortal creature having both a body and also a soul which are united throughout all time. . . . But when they [Zeus, gods, and demi-gods] go to banquet and festival, then they move up the step to the top of the vault of heaven. The chariots of the gods in even poise, obeying the rein, glide rapidly; but the others [mortals] labour, for the vicious steed goes heavily, weighing down the charioteer to the earth when his steed has not been thoroughly trained:--and this is the hour of agony and extremest conflict for the soul.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, man, the creature that evolves, is shown to be endowed with elements from both the spiritual world and the material world, and the conflict that results from the union.

The idea of man's duality and interest in the topic is a basic part of Renaissance psychology. In accordance with Renaissance theory, man is a blend of reason, the angelic or divine, and passion, the bestial. According to Lily B. Campbell, the thinking of the time was influenced by Plutarch, who felt not only that man was body and soul, but also that the soul was in itself twofold. This philosophy can be traced to a statement of Plutarch concerning the makeup of the soul:

but one part thereof is more spirituall, intelligible, and reasonable, which ought of right and according to nature have the soveraigntie and command in man: the other is brutish, sensuall, erronius, and disorderly of it selfe,<sup>2</sup> requiring the direction and guidance of another.

Miss Campbell states that "the fundamental moral concern of the period is with the passions and the reason."<sup>3</sup>

This concern with the passions and reason is evidenced in William Shakespeare's Macbeth, a study of the conflict between reason and passion, the divine and bestial in man. Macbeth oscillates and wavers in his thoughts about the rash deeds he might perform. This struggle between the reasonable and passionate in human nature is vividly demonstrated in Macbeth's hesitating, wavering decision to fulfill the prophecy of the three witches. That the keen interest and deep concern for the warring inner makeup of mankind is observable in Renaissance literature such as Macbeth shows man's awareness of the stress.

The concept of duality plays a role not only in this traditional interest in man's makeup, but also in the ideas and connotations surrounding the numbers "two" and "one." In Three Books of Occult Philosophy, Henry Cornelius Agrippa lists several meanings for the number "two," but only one particular meaning in the passage is relevant to this thesis and its emphasis on duality in a study of "The Birthmark" and "Rappaccini's Daughter":

This is also sometimes the number of discord, and confusion, of misfortune, and uncleanness, whence Saint Hierom against Jovianus faith, that therefore it was not spoken in the second day of the creation of the world, and God said, That it was good, because the number [sic] of two is evill. Hence also it was that God commanded that all unclean Animals should go into the Ark by couples; because as I said, the number of two, is a number of uncleanness, and it is most unhappy in their Soothsayings, especially if those things, from whence the Soothsaying is taken, be Saturnall, or Martiall, for these two are accounted by the Astrologers unfortunate. It is also reported, that the number of two doth cause apparitions of Ghosts, and fearfull Goblins, and bring mischiefs of evill spirits to them that travell by night. Pythagoras (as Eusebius reports) said, that Unity was God, and a good intellect; and that Duality was a Divell, and an evill intellect, in which is a materiall multitude: wherefore the Pythagorians called unity Apollo, and two, strife, and boldness; and three, Justice, which is the highest perfection, and is not without many mysteries.<sup>4</sup>

Another book entitled The Difference Betweene The Auncient Phisicke and The Latter Phisicke restates this same association of duality with evil and discord and the

association of unity with harmony and concord. Published in 1585, this book associates unity and duality with the "auncient phisicke" and the "latter phisicke." The author contends that the "latter phisicke" is wrongheaded and destructive because it is founded on duality, a false center which is nature, and that the "auncient phisicke" is correct and helpful because it is based on unity, the true center of which is God. The "auncient phisicke" is "founded upon the Center of unitie, concord, and agreement," while the Ethnikes or heathen have a "physicke" which "is founded upon a contrary center to the other, therefore a false Center. For it conflictteth in dualitie, discord, and contrarietie."<sup>5</sup> The following illustration demonstrates how the "latter phisicke" intersected the sphere of the "auncient phisicke," which had the true center based on God.



TRUE CENTER of "AUNCIENT PHISICKE"

FALSE CENTER OF "LATTER PHISICKE"

In conjunction with this notion of medicine, those who, questing for knowledge or wisdom and seeking guidance or inspiration from God, also seek and further concord, harmony, and unity. In opposition to this theory is the belief that

those who, relying on nature, quest for knowledge not only work from a false center (Nature is merely an agent through which God operates), but also cut the circle with a true center and produce discord, disharmony, and duality.

Though it is impossible to say whether Hawthorne was acquainted with The Difference Between The Auncient Phisicke and The Latter Phisicke, that he knew both Agrippa and Paracelsus is known. This book of 1585 was written in defense of approaches to medicine advocated by Paracelsus. Hawthorne refers to him as well as Agrippa in "The Birthmark": "They were the works of philosophers of the middle ages, such as Albertus Magnus, Cornelius Agrippa, Paracelsus. . . ."6  
Thus it is clear that Hawthorne was at least cognizant of the ideas associated with the terms unity and duality.

That effects of these concepts are observable in other literature is evidenced by a study of Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra by Lawrence Edward Bowling. In his opening statements about the topic, Bowling feels that there is

a philosophical concept which the author [Shakespeare] seems to have accepted as natural law and in accordance with which he apparently constructed his play. This guiding and informing principle may be stated as follows: Every organism or organization, if it is to survive and function properly, must achieve and maintain an ordered unity. If unity is conceived in terms of a circle, then what we are saying is that a circle can have only one center. If, at any time, two or more points attempt to

function equally as dual or multiple centers, disunity and discord will prevail until a single center is established.<sup>7</sup>

Bowling contends that The Tragedy of Antony and Cleopatra deals with disunity "on three different levels: in the individual, in the family, and in the state."<sup>8</sup> According to Bowling, "Antony's greatest mistake was not that he failed to choose honor over love but that he kept the two interests equal thereby effecting the disunity by which he was destroyed. It was only after being physically destroyed that Antony has finally achieved that spiritual unity which made his tragedy a triumph."<sup>9</sup>

Observing effects of the disunity of Antony and his achievement of unity only through physical death, one can demonstrate similar effects in the two short stories of Nathaniel Hawthorne, "The Birthmark" and "Rappaccini's Daughter," upon which this study is focused. In the beginning of the action of each story, one or more major characters are in a state of unity. It is when they diversify their interests or their feelings, when they become dual in purpose, that they precipitate disunity, discord, and misfortune. Like Antony's achievement of spiritual unity, the victims of duality, Georgiana and Beatrice, regain their unity only through physical death. Thus, with an awareness of the tension that exists in man,

because of this unity and duality, one can devote his attention to this concept as it operates within the two stories. After duality has engulfed the victims, they begin their inevitable quest for unity and peace. The unified person who succumbs to duality strives to re-establish his unity, since every organism should have only one center and maintain its unity.

## CHAPTER II

### TONE AND ATMOSPHERE

The impact of unity and duality upon "The Birthmark" and "Rappaccini's Daughter" is traceable in two major elements of the narrative: the tone and atmosphere and the delineation of character. Both elements are mutually productive, for they influence each other by reinforcing the observable effects of duality as it operates through the atmosphere and upon the characters. This tight interweaving heightens the impact of the duality conflict in the respective story. Before examining the effects of duality upon the characters, one should take a closer look at the setting and background in which they operate. The tone and atmosphere provide an illuminating backdrop for the characters and their actions because of both setting and human relationships.

The settings, which give rise to an atmosphere peculiar to each story, reflect a somewhat indistinguishable combination of occult philosophy and early modern science. This combination provides for the method of experimentation utilized by Aylmer and Rappaccini. Their experiments demand

a laboratory setting in both narratives: the laboratory-apartments of Aylmer and the laboratory-garden of Rappaccini. Each is an appropriate place for the characters to reveal themselves. There is a strangeness, an almost magical element in each laboratory. Both are weird worlds of would-be creators. These settings provide fascinating conditions in which individual and collective struggles with thoughts and emotions conducive to duality appear inevitable. The inevitability of conflicts, both internal and external, becomes a pervasive atmosphere in each story.

The laboratory-apartments of Aylmer are saturated with this atmosphere of conflict. The impression of threat and accomplishment inseparable from the conflicts between Aylmer and Georgiana and within each one individually is found in this strange setting. These conflicts add an air of suspense and anxiety to the story as Aylmer endeavors to remove the birthmark and as Georgiana slowly concedes to let her husband make the attempt.

In the "learned societies" of Europe Aylmer enjoys great admiration because of his "discoveries in the elemental powers of Nature."<sup>1</sup> However, in the records of Aylmer's experiments, Georgiana notices that his "most splendid successes were almost invariably failures."<sup>2</sup> This discrepancy between Aylmer's high aspirations and his

subsequent failures demonstrates the internal conflict within Aylmer. Aylmer is unwilling to admit the truth that Nature often guards her secrets very closely, and he resumes these "half-forgotten investigations"<sup>3</sup> in his scheme to find a treatment for Georgiana. The threat of possible failure and the hope for ultimate accomplishment create an atmosphere of frustration and suspense.

This impression of threat and accomplishment is visible also between Aylmer and Georgiana soon after their marriage. Aylmer's shock and abhorrence while observing the birthmark create a wedge in the couple's relationship. The penetrating gaze of Aylmer upon the imprint frightens and terrifies Georgiana and shows the beginnings of the conflict. His unspoken fear of failure manifests itself in the breakdown of trust between the two. Georgiana hesitates to give her consent for Aylmer to begin his experiment. She does not yet fully trust his scientific skill. However, after discovering his library records, she gains a profound understanding of her husband and then longs as desperately as he does for success in removal of the birthmark. The reader sees Aylmer's distrust of Georgiana as she "intrudes" into his laboratory. Aylmer is upset and lashes out with the accusation that she has no trust in her husband. Georgiana very perceptively replies, "You mistrust your wife; you have concealed the anxiety with which you watch

the development of this experiment."<sup>4</sup> The idea of threat and accomplishment creates an air of distrust between the two individuals and intensifies the atmosphere of suspense and conflict.

These conflicts reflect the setting in the secluded, extensive apartments of Aylmer. Georgiana's first impression of the boudoir is one of "enchantment." As she gazes around the room, she notices the ceiling-to-floor curtains which, "concealing all angles and straight lines, appeared to shut in the scene from infinite space."<sup>5</sup> As a result of this appearance Georgiana fancies the room "might be a pavilion among the clouds."<sup>6</sup> There is no sunshine in the room, and the lamps emit hues that blend into "a soft, impurpled radiance."<sup>7</sup> This unreal world is the haven for Georgiana, and in this atmosphere Aylmer feels that he might "draw a magic circle around her."<sup>8</sup> The strangeness, the enchantment, and the magical element intertwine to create a fantastic world of half-magical and half-scientific experiments.

A garden is the laboratory setting for "Rappaccini's Daughter." The responses of Giovanni Guasconti at the beginning of the story hint at something ominous in the background. This garden, an "Eden of the present world,"<sup>9</sup> recalls the Fall and perhaps foreshadows another fall.

Giovanni's observation of "the distrustful gardner" who "defended his hands with a pair of thick gloves" and "placed a kind of mask over his mouth and nostrils"<sup>10</sup> reveals the strangeness that pervades this botanical wonderland. The luxuriant shrubs are like "malignant influences, such as savage beasts, or deadly snakes, or evil spirits."<sup>11</sup> Even Rappaccini's avoidance of touching or inhaling the vegetation makes a disagreeable impression upon Giovanni and heightens his awareness of the true nature of the garden.

The contrast of Beatrice's familiarity and tenderness toward the flowers has an equally baffling effect upon the student observer. She handles and inhales the odor of the plants her father has "sedulously avoided."<sup>12</sup> She even embraces the magnificent purple shrub and calls her "sister." Giovanni rubs his eyes to be sure that she is really a "girl tending her favorite flower, or one sister performing the duties of affection to another."<sup>13</sup> These actions coupled with the later surprising impressions of an insect dying from her breath and a fresh bouquet of flowers withering in her hands increase the magical, weird atmosphere of the garden world.

The mysterious garden with its strange flowers and contrasted attendants creates an impression that here the magical and the scientific are intermingled. Consequently,

neither the wide-eyed wonder of Giovanni nor the aversion of old Lisabetta and Baglioni is a surprise. Obviously the scene of major actions in "Rappaccini's Daughter" is a scene quite unlike and separated from the normal world outside the walled garden. About this setting is an air of something malignant, if not deadly.

[ The garden setting of the seemingly "malignant influences"<sup>14</sup> of the plants is reinforced by the malignant influences of Baglioni and Lisabetta. The walls of the garden protect Beatrice from the evil of the outside world, but they also arouse the curiosity and rivalry of Baglioni. His hateful and envious insinuations about Beatrice and his refusal to let Giovanni be snatched from his hands show a malevolent influence in his nature. This influence infects Giovanni and the relationship between the two young people. Even Lisabetta betrays a spiteful ugliness as she grasps Giovanni's coat and entices him with a promise of a private entrance into the garden. Like Baglioni, she seems sinister in her actions to play a role in the relationship of Beatrice and Giovanni. These characters' malicious natures reinforce the ominous, deadly atmosphere of the garden setting.

Intimate human relationships also affect the tone and atmosphere of each selection. Three distinct human relationships add to the tense atmosphere of "Rappaccini's

Daughter." These are the father-daughter relationship, the lover-girl relationship, and the student-teacher relationship. Two definite relationships contribute to the atmosphere in "The Birthmark." These are the husband-wife relationship of Aylmer and Georgiana and the master-servant relationship of Aylmer and Aminidab. All of these relationships contribute to a probing, obsessive, distrustful, and self-destructive tone in each story.

The father-daughter relationship between Rappaccini and Beatrice shows a complete lack of understanding and an inequality in love. Rappaccini believes he is protecting Beatrice by making her poisonous to all mankind. He is shocked and astounded when she calls her plight a "miserable doom."<sup>15</sup> He has thought he is endowing her with powers that will protect from all others. Rappaccini misjudges the needs of his daughter, who wants to be "loved, not feared."<sup>16</sup> Likewise, his love for Beatrice is second to that of his science. Baglioni remarks that "his patients are interesting to him only as subjects for some new experiment,"<sup>17</sup> and also that he would "sacrifice human life, his own among the rest,"<sup>18</sup> to add to his scientific knowledge. Beatrice's love is pure and unencumbered. She lives without qualifications, without ulterior motives.

Similarly, in the relationship of lover and girl between Giovanni and Beatrice, there is a lack of understanding

and genuine mutual love. Giovanni is incapable of loving Beatrice as she purely loves him; instead, his feeling is a "wild offspring of both love and horror."<sup>19</sup> He misinterprets her outwardly poisonous nature and fails to understand that she is a creature of God, pure of soul and heart. Beatrice is lonely and seeks to enjoy the companionship of Giovanni temporarily and then let him depart. Giovanni exploits and misuses the genuine love of Beatrice and never attains an understanding of her true nature.

The third relationship, that of student and teacher, Giovanni and Baglioni, shows the upsetting influence of Baglioni as he prys into the life and thoughts of Giovanni. He confuses Giovanni at every meeting and distorts the picture of Beatrice. He infiltrates and poisons the mind of Giovanni and finally detects the physical changes in the student. This relationship proves to be very disturbing and upsetting and permeates the atmosphere of the story.

The first relationship under scrutiny in "The Birthmark" is that of husband and wife, Aylmer and Georgiana. Again the male character exploits and misuses the love of the female. Aylmer's passionate love of science overshadows his love of Georgiana, and he strives to intertwine the two. Conversely, Georgiana's love for Aylmer is a solitary feeling unencumbered by the love of another object. His

obsessive, probing feelings create an atmosphere of distrustfulness, while his endeavors to perfect Nature create a suspenseful, anxious atmosphere. This husband-wife relationship is an underlying factor in creating the discordant tone of the narrative.

The relationship of master and servant, Aylmer and Aminidab, adds to and embellishes the suspenseful tone of "The Birthmark." Aminidab, the man of clay seemingly stoking the fires of hell, is the antithesis of Aylmer. Yet his remark that "if she were my wife, I'd never part with that birthmark,"<sup>20</sup> conveys the idea that he is perhaps wiser than his master, the accomplished scientist. Aminidab's insight into the real problem of the removal of the birthmark is a vivid contrast to Aylmer's blind obsession to remove it. This ironic juxtaposition of perceptive knowledge in a man such as Aminidab adds a foreboding, suspenseful atmosphere to the story. This contrast is further evidence of Aylmer's indifference to basic humanity and forecasts the probable failure of his experiment as well as suggesting a world in which his striving reflects his folly.

Both settings and human relationships reflect the ominous, suspenseful tone present in both stories. Settings that are a weird combination of the magical and the

scientific make ideal scenery for the characters' relationships. These intimate human relationships that betray distrust, misuse, conflict, and misunderstanding permeate the atmosphere and make it foreboding. Both of these elements create the tone and mood of each story by blackening the atmosphere. The effect of duality upon the settings and the human relationships points up the fact that conflicts indicative of the dual state have a discernible impact on "The Birthmark" and "Rappaccini's Daughter."

## CHAPTER III

### CHARACTER DELINEATION

The impact of unity and duality upon the second element, the delineation of character, becomes more vivid after analysis of the tone and atmosphere of each narrative. These weird worlds of would-be creators in which nothing turns out as it is intended provide the ideal setting and atmosphere for the individual characters as they become victims of duality. The benediction of unity in life is sacrificed foolishly by the male characters and helplessly by the two female characters. As victims of this dual state, the characters change in both action and attitude.

An observation of Aylmer, Baglioni, Giovanni, Rappaccini, Georgiana, and Beatrice reveals that each character reacts to the problem of duality in an individual manner and undergoes an upheaval in personality. When unified or devoted to one way of life, each character is in harmony with himself and others. It is when the character diversifies his interests or is perturbed by others that changes occur. [Just as Plato's chariot and charioteer were plagued by opposing forces, the characters, especially

the women, experience an inner conflict that pulls and tugs until the person is reduced to a state of duality.] Thus, the element of character delineation is of major importance in tracing the effect of unity and duality in "Rappaccini's Daughter" and "The Birthmark."

The men of these two short stories become the victims of duality through their own foolish actions. The effort of Aylmer to outdo or perfect Nature, the attempt of Rappaccini to change Nature, the endeavor of Baglioni to outmaneuver his rival, and misguided behavior of Giovanni create situations in which duality takes precedence over unity. As each man becomes embroiled in the tug of forces within himself, he becomes disunified and discordant. None of these men ever attains the state of unity which is necessary for one to live a happy harmonious existence.

Aylmer's state of duality stems from two sources: his efforts to use his love for Georgiana to further his love of science and his desire to outdo Nature, to outdo the Creator Himself. The first source involves the rivalry between love of science and love of woman, a common occurrence according to Hawthorne: "it was not unusual for the love of science to rival the love of woman in its depth and absorbing energy."<sup>1</sup> However, one who has enjoyed a unified state always seeks to reestablish and stabilize

his condition as is evidenced by Aylmer's attempt to use his love for Georgiana to further his love of science:

He had devoted himself, however, too unre-  
servedly to scientific studies ever to be  
weaned from them by any second passion. His  
love for his young wife might prove the stronger  
of the two, but it could only be by inter-  
twining itself with his love of science, and  
uniting the strength of the latter to his own.<sup>2</sup>

Aylmer is risking the loss of unity by taking on a second love, but he ignores this possibility and tries to intertwine the two. The result is a foolish capitulation to the forces of conflict inherent in duality. As a victim of the dual state, Aylmer hurls himself into discord and disharmony.

A major part of Aylmer's duality is his desire to outdo Nature by attempting to remove the tiny birthmark from Georgiana's cheek. In effect he becomes a god or creator in his effort to perfect Nature. As the removal of the birthmark becomes an obsession with him, Aylmer experiences more discord and disharmony: "Until now he had not been aware of the tyrannizing influence acquired by one idea over his mind, and of the lengths which he might find his heart to go for the sake of giving himself peace."<sup>3</sup>

The birthmark causes him "trouble" and "horror" and becomes "the symbol of his wife's liability to sin, sorrow, decay, and death."<sup>4</sup> This symbol of imperfection has to be removed

and Aylmer assumes his role of would-be creator in his attempt to accomplish the removal.

The discord and disharmony Aylmer is experiencing manifest themselves in his prophetic dream in which he "fancies" attempting the operation for the removal of the birthmark. After guiltily admitting remembering the dream to Georgiana, he hastily asserts his confidence in himself when he says, "I am convinced of the perfect practicability of its removal."<sup>5</sup> His reply to Georgiana's request to use his power to regain his "own peace" and to save her "from madness" reflects his presumptuous reliance solely upon his own knowledge and skill:

Noblest, dearest, tenderest wife, cried Aylmer, rapturously, doubt not my power. I have already given this matter the deepest thought--thought which might almost have enlightened me to create a being less perfect than yourself. Georgiana, you have led me deeper than ever into the heart of science. I feel fully competent to render this dear cheek as faultless as its fellow; and then, most beloved what will be my triumph when I shall have corrected what nature left imperfect in her fairest work. Even Pygmalion, when his sculptured woman assumed life, felt not greater ecstasy than mine will be.<sup>6</sup>

Aylmer's endeavor to recreate Nature and his supreme confidence in his earthly power foreshadow the failure that will leave him in stunned duality. As a foolish victim of duality, Aylmer experiences no catharsis, no humbling in his creator-like attempt to remake a creature

of Nature. Duality and the resulting conflicts overcome and engulf the once-unified Aylmer because of his attempt to outdo Nature and his effort to subjugate one love to another. Aylmer learns nothing from mistakes which arise because of his confused thoughts and rash actions, the outgrowths of his duality.

The second victim of duality, Baglioni, again demonstrates the foolish capitulation to the tug of forces inseparable from duality. His dual state emanates from the rivalry between him and Rappaccini and his subsequent efforts to outmaneuver his rival. Hawthorne notes that "there was a professional warfare of long continuance between him and Dr. Rappaccini, in which the latter was generally thought to have gained the advantage."<sup>7</sup> Baglioni's comments and innuendoes about the learned scientist betray the inner conflict, the internal discord that he experiences when the subject of Dr. Rappaccini is mentioned.

As a consequence of this rivalry, Baglioni tries to outmaneuver Rappaccini and thwart the other scientists' efforts to use Giovanni in an experiment. Since Giovanni is the son of a longtime friend, Baglioni feels that the boy is a part of his domain. When Rappaccini seemingly infringes on this domain, Baglioni is infuriated and remarks:

The youth is the son of my old friend, and shall not come to any harm from which the arcana of medical science can preserve him. Besides it is too insufferable an impertinence in Rappaccini, thus to snatch the lad out of my own hands, as I may say, and make use of him for his infernal experiments. This daughter of his! It shall be looked to. Perchance, most learned Rappaccini, I may foil you where you little dream of it.<sup>8</sup>

Thus the battle over Giovanni begins.

As a result of the rivalry and warfare between the two scientists, Baglioni becomes a victim of malice and envy, a state of mind associated with wicked enchantment. The motives of Baglioni to outmaneuver Rappaccini take him to an extreme state of malice in his actions concerning others. He unhesitatingly involves Giovanni in his plan to foil his rival; Baglioni's malice allows him to victimize Giovanni as a tool with which he will seek his revenge. The malice and envy caused by the rivalry keep Baglioni in a state of uproar and conflict.

Further evidence of Baglioni's dual state is seen in his meddling in and disrupting of Giovanni's life. Every meeting between the professor and student, at his home, on the street, and in Giovanni's apartment, shows the disruptive influence of Baglioni. His own conflicts, his own lack of harmony with others, contaminate the emotions and lives of others. Thus, disharmony and discord are visible in Baglioni, another foolish victim of duality

who never regains his unity.

Giovanni is a victim of duality primarily because of the influence of Baglioni upon his thinking and subsequent actions. Giovanni is in a state of unity when he arrives in Padua as a student, but he soon becomes infatuated with the beautiful Beatrice and diversifies his interests. His first mention of Beatrice to Baglioni invites baseless accusations concerning her scientific knowledge. A subsequent meeting with Baglioni produces a similar, disturbing effect upon the impressionable youth. The encounter of the two in the old streets of Padua shows that Baglioni's questioning arouses the passion of Giovanni. Giovanni, "finding Baglioni's pertinacity intolerable, here broke away, and was gone before the professor could again seize his arm."<sup>9</sup> A surmise about Lisabetta's role in his entry into the garden is "probably excited by his conversation with Baglioni."<sup>10</sup> A suspicion like this disturbs Giovanni and stimulates the inner conflict seething within his heart and head.

The final meeting of Baglioni and Giovanni brings the role of duality into the forefront. Giovanni is perturbed by the story about the Indian woman and Alexander the Great, by the comment about the fragrance of the room, by the tone in which the professor alludes to Beatrice,

and by the bestowal of the silver vial with its medicinal liquid. After Baglioni leaves, Giovanni expresses doubts about Beatrice and wonders about the professor's insinuation concerning the fragrance of his room. It is at this time that Giovanni makes the horrifying discovery that his breath can kill a deadly spider. Now, completely caught up in the web of duality, Giovanni verbalizes his interior discord and disharmony by his accusations of Beatrice. As a victim of this dual state, Giovanni experiences the same conflicts that all victims do when embroiled in a tug of forces that reduce the person to a state of disunity. Like Aylmer and Baglioni, Giovanni remains in a state of disunity and never regains this benediction of life.

Hawthorne gives only an implication of what lies beyond for Rappaccini as he is thrust into duality by the failure of his experiment. [This scientist becomes creator-like in his endeavor to imbue Beatrice with poison and thus make her immune to the evil of the world] He is singularly devoted to his science and the success of his daughter's experiment. Only the unplanned death of Beatrice and Baglioni's shout of "Rappaccini! Rappaccini! and is this the upshot of your experiment!"<sup>11</sup> jolt Rappaccini into a dual state. Previously the singleness of his devotion to his fantastic garden has reflected confidence and satisfaction, even though he does have to guard against

poisonous influences of the plants. [He is a master of both himself and the small world he has created.] When thwarted by Baglioni, however, Rappaccini succumbs to the shock; and, though his condition is merely implied, it does betray disharmony typical of other victims of duality.

The women in the two stories, Georgiana and Beatrice, represent unity. Nonetheless, since they are abused by the men, they pass through a state of duality then back to unity. Unlike the men, they learn from experience and manage to regain their unified state. This state of concord and harmony reestablishes itself in each woman as she becomes aware of eminent death. Physical death is, of course, man's final step in the journey to regain unity, a condition besieged by the pulls of the spiritual, the soul, and the material, the body. Death has been accepted traditionally as the end to this constant conflict. Likewise, unity is achieved when Georgiana and Beatrice are fully aware of its coming.

Georgiana and Beatrice are helpless victims of duality. They are innocent pawns caught in the midst of conflicts inseparable from duality which penetrates their lives. Each is in a state of unity, at peace with herself, when the stories begin. Gradually both are involved in a conflict that has besieged another person, and they, too,

encounter discord and disunity in their being. The external pressures imposed by the men characters really create their problems. As Aylmer insists that Georgiana allow him to remove the birthmark and as Giovanni informs Beatrice of her poisonous nature, the conflicts of duality besiege these women. As they are perturbed by other disunified persons, they helplessly become entangled in a state of duality.

Georgiana is a perfect example of unity. She is happy, peaceful, and relaxed in her new life as the wife of Aylmer. She calmly accepts the mark on her cheek by recounting that other loves thought of it as a "fairy's magic endowment"; she states that "to tell you the truth it has been so often called a charm that I was simple enough to imagine it might be so."<sup>12</sup> Only Aylmer's abhorrence of the imprint and his obsessive endeavor to remove it thrust her into duality. Eventually she succumbs to his preoccupation with the crimson-shaped mark and decides to let Aylmer remove it. Finally she reaches the climax in the duality conflict when she admits, "Not even Aylmer now hated it so much as she."<sup>13</sup>

After Georgiana is perturbed by Aylmer's obsession with the removal of the mark, she is beset with inner tensions of discord and disharmony. She begs her husband to

rescue her "from madness" since she no longer accepts the imprint as a natural part of her. From this state of duality forced upon her by Aylmer, Georgiana gradually begins the steps that will regain her unity. The initial steps come with her reading of Aylmer's records of his accomplishments and failures in scientific endeavors. In Aylmer's journal Georgiana sees "the sad confession and continual exemplification of the shortcomings of the composite man, the spirit burdened with clay and working in matter, and of the despair that assails the higher nature at finding itself so miserably thwarted by the earthly part."<sup>14</sup> She now understands and almost worships Aylmer as never before.

The perusal of Aylmer's library creates a new mood of self-acceptance and self-sacrifice within Georgiana. She sees what drives and motivates her husband and understands why he is obsessed with removing the mark. These responses are preparation for her recovery of unity, a recovery achieved through her death. Even before drinking the concoction she speaks of dying: "But, being what I find myself, methinks I am of all mortals the most fit to die."<sup>15</sup> This self-sacrificing mood is quite revealing of Aylmer's situation. The understanding, the tenderness, and the forgiveness with which she utters, "My poor Aylmer, you

have aimed loftily; you have done nobly. Do not repent that with so high and pure a feeling, you have rejected the best the earth could offer. Aylmer, dearest Aylmer, I am dying!"<sup>16</sup> portray the regained unity she has achieved with her awareness of eminent death. This woman misused by her husband passes only temporarily through the dual state and then regains the precious blessing of life, unity.

Beatrice is the second helpless victim of duality, a woman misused by her father, Baglioni, and Giovanni. This innocent young girl is happy, free, and completely at ease in her flower-garden home. She enjoys the harmonious state of unity even though she is aware that there is something strange in her nature. Insects die from her breath, and flowers wilt at her touch. Her pure nature and obedient acceptance of her nature is demonstrated by her crossing herself when the insect dies at her feet:

For an instant the reptile contorted itself violently, and then lay motionless in the sunshine. Beatrice observed this remarkable phenomenon and crossed herself, sadly, but without surprise; nor did she therefore hesitate to arrange the fatal flower in her bosom.<sup>17</sup>

This action as well as Beatrice's joyous, happy attitude demonstrates that she is in a state of unity and at peace with herself and others.

Even Giovanni's intrusion into the garden is accepted naturally by Beatrice. She loves him sincerely, yet does

not wish to keep him forever. She wants to love him only for awhile, retain his image in her mind, and then let him disappear from her garden-world. Beatrice is not driven to duality until Giovanni is harsh with her. His terrifying accusations hurt her deeply and reveal the experiment her father has made of her. The awful conflict, discord, and disharmony that result from her dual state are visible in her realization:

I see it! I see it! It is my father's fatal science! No, no, Giovanni; it was not I! Never! never! I dreamed only to love thee and be with thee a little time, and so to let thee pass away, leaving out thine image in mine heart; for, Giovanni, believe it, though my body be nourished with poison, my spirit is God's creature, and craves love as its daily food. But my father,--he has united us in this fearful sympathy. Yes; spurn me, tread upon me, kill me! Oh, what is death after such words as thine? But it was not I. Not for a world of bliss would I have done it.<sup>18</sup>

Steeped in duality, Beatrice accepts Giovanni's vial of liquid with a will to sacrifice herself. She has already said death is nothing after hearing the cruel words of Giovanni. She seems prepared, almost anxious, to experience death. She is the first to drink the liquid and says, "I will drink; but do thou await the result."<sup>19</sup>

Like Georgiana's, her dying words reveal that her awareness of coming death shows that she is regaining her unity. The conflict, the disunity is about to end with her oncoming death:

But it matters not. I am going, father, where the evil which thou hast striven to mingle with my being will pass away like a dream--like the fragrance of these poisonous flowers, which will no longer taint my breath among the flowers of Eden. Farewell, Giovanni! Thy words of hatred are like lead within my heart; but they, too, will fall away as I ascend. Oh, was there not, from the first, more poison in thy nature than in mine?<sup>20</sup>

Thus, Beatrice, misused by her father in his experiment, misunderstood by Giovanni in his love, and misused by Baglioni in his attempt to beat Rappaccini, reestablishes her unified state through her self-sacrificial death.

The major characters of "Rappaccini's Daughter" and "The Birthmark" prove through their change in action and attitude that duality has a disrupting effect upon their lives. Whether through their own foolish endeavors or because of perturbation by others, the characters suffer the consequences of the inner tug of forces indicative of the dual state of which they are victims. The profound effect of this condition exemplifies the devastating results when man acquiesces or is forced to acquiesce to the forces of duality. As Agrippa implies, the individual who succumbs to the inharmonious effects of duality loses the peace and harmony associated with God, who is Unity, and suffers discord associated with the Devil, who is Duality.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION

This analysis of "The Birthmark" and "Rappaccini's Daughter" reiterates the fact that Nathaniel Hawthorne utilized traditional ideas associated with unity and duality when he fashioned his stories. These stories reflect the idea that he was steeped in lore associated with these terms. The association of unity with harmony, concord, peace, and God and the association of duality with discord, conflict, disharmony, and the Devil is a basic element of these two Hawthorne narratives. His awareness of the impact of these forces operating within an individual and upon a situation is evident in the workings and repercussions of the dual state upon both the characters and atmosphere. [Thus, the conflicts, the character changes, and the choice of setting demonstrate that unity and duality are potent factors in the unfolding and conclusion of each story.]

The appearance of conflict and discord, indications of the presence of duality, is found in the atmosphere and setting of both selections. The choice of weird laboratory settings shows a strange combination of the scientific with the magical. The ominous atmosphere is heightened by the

intimate human relationships which portray conflict, discord, and disharmony. The evil and malevolent atmosphere that pervades the setting and the people in it imply the presence of duality.

The characters themselves reflect most poignantly the discord, the disharmony, and the lack of peace that dominate each story. The scientists, Aylmer, Rappaccini, and Baglioni, who foolishly fall into the dual state, aptly demonstrate the effects of disharmony within themselves. Giovanni, the tool of both Baglioni and Rappaccini, becomes distraught and discordant as he falls into the dual state. The helpless victims, Beatrice and Georgiana, are excellent examples of the shift from unity to duality, then back to the unified state. Tracing their personality changes gives insight into the forces of duality as it overcomes a person. The loss of peace and harmony is quite visible as the analysis and study of characters continues throughout a reading of each narrative.

The atmosphere and characters are so closely interwoven that they become the main lines of narrative structure. Unity and duality delineate the structure as well as the atmosphere and personalities. The progression and development of the structure of each story proceeds in a fashion quite similar to that of character development. The close

interrelation of these three elements of the narrative would cause duplication and repetition if a step-by-step study of narrative structure were undertaken. Narrative structure actually parallels the investigation of characters and setting in relation to the dual state or the unified state.

Nathaniel Hawthorne employs quite succinctly and expertly his conditioned ideas concerning unity and duality in both "The Birthmark" and "Rappaccini's Daughter." The influence and effect of these forces and the resulting conflicts make a plausible case for a study of them in these stories. By observing the settings, the atmosphere, and the characters, one can readily view these concepts at work. The discord, the turmoil, the disharmony, and the conflict are traceable to the forces of the dual state as it perturbs the characters and infects the atmosphere of the story.

The conclusion of each story demonstrates the results of duality after it has ravaged its victims. The ultimate tone of each piece seems to intimate that the Devil is lurking in the background with all his ominous, evil fore-shadowings. The characters aptly reflect the consequences of an invasion of discord into the being of a person. Only physical death holds the reward, unity, for both Beatrice

and Georgiana, the victims of man's egoists who have let themselves be dominated by a tug of forces inseparable from duality. Aylmer and the males of "Rappaccini's Daughter" never regain their unity and are left in the discordant, confused, and frustrated state. The endings of both narratives leave the reader with a feeling that some mystifying force has pervaded the entire settings and all the characters, and this force has left its indelible mark on these two Hawthorne stories.

## NOTES

### CHAPTER I

<sup>1</sup>B. Jowett, M.A., tr., The Dialogues of Plato, Vol. I (New York: Random House, 1937), pp. 250-251.

<sup>2</sup>Philemon Holland, Holland's Plutarch "Moralia" (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, Limited, 1911), pp. 65-66.

<sup>3</sup>Lily B. Campbell, Shakespeare's Tragic Heroes (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1952), p. 68.

<sup>4</sup>Henry Cornelius Agrippa, Three Books of Occult Philosophy, tr. J. F. (London: Printed for R. W., 1651), pp. 177-178.

<sup>5</sup>R. B. Esquire, The Difference Betweene The Auncient Phisicke and the Latter Phisicke (London: Robert Walley, 1585), B. i.-v.

<sup>6</sup>Nathaniel Hawthorne, "The Birthmark," The Complete Novels and Selected Tales of Nathaniel Hawthorne, ed. Norman Holmes Pearson (New York: The Modern Library, 1937), p. 1025.

<sup>7</sup>Lawrence Edward Bowling, "Antony's Internal Disunity," Studies in English Literature, IV (1964), p. 239.

<sup>8</sup>Bowling, p. 239.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 246.

### CHAPTER II

<sup>1</sup>Nathaniel Hawthorne, "The Birthmark," The Complete Novels and Selected Tales of Nathaniel Hawthorne, ed. Norman Holmes Pearson (New York: The Modern Library, 1937), p. 1024.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 1029.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 1025.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 1030.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 1025.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 1025.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 1026.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 1026.

<sup>9</sup>Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Rappaccini's Daughter," The Complete Novels and Selected Tales of Nathaniel Hawthorne, p. 1046.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 1046.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 1046.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 1046.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 1047.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 1046.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 1064.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 1064.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 1048.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 1048.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 1051.

<sup>20</sup>Hawthorne, "The Birthmark," p, 1025.

### CHAPTER III

<sup>1</sup>Nathaniel Hawthorne, "The Birthmark," The Complete Novels and Selected Tales of Nathaniel Hawthorne, p. 1021.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 1021.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 1023.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 1022.

- <sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 1024.
- <sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 1024.
- <sup>7</sup>Hawthorne, "Rappaccini's Daughter," p. 1048.
- <sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 1053.
- <sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 1053.
- <sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 1053.
- <sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 1065.
- <sup>12</sup>Hawthorne, "The Birthmark," p. 1021.
- <sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 1028.
- <sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 1029.
- <sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 1031.
- <sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 1032.
- <sup>17</sup>Hawthorne, "Rappaccini's Daughter," p. 1050.
- <sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 1063.
- <sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 1064.
- <sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 1065.

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