

<http://somatosphere.net/2017/09/beautys-knowledge.html>

## Beauty's Knowledge: Hawthorne's Moral Fable "Rappaccini's Daughter"

2017-09-08 15:57:39

By Leo Coleman

Nathaniel Hawthorne's story "Rappaccini's Daughter" is a nineteenth-century moral fable that sets the fruits of experimental knowledge against obligations to humanity, and stages a dramatic encounter between these two apparent goods. In many ways, the moral it offers seems familiar, and could be recognized by anyone with even a passing familiarity with contemporary bioethical debates. It features a mad scientist's garden, a gorgeous but poisonous plant of his creation, and a lovely daughter who tends to his terrible plants, and who is—like the plant—both attractive and potentially infectious. The daughter receives the attentions of a naïve medical student, and she falls in love with him, but their fate is shadowed by the actions of not one but two bad scientist father-figures who experiment upon the younger characters and try to shape their (biological) destinies without their knowledge. But Hawthorne's story does not simply anticipate, in an antique and allegorical way, contemporary defenses of human dignity and nature's inviolability. Nor does it merely rehearse, with its private garden and unknowingly experimented-upon subjects, a Lockean notion of our own inevitable and natural possession of our bodies and the fruits of our lives and labor.

Hawthorne's story puts the experimental subject at the center of its moral allegory, suffering both hopes and fears provoked by her own mutability, her own biological plasticity. That is, his titular character is no innocent pawn in the hands of the great scientist: she is an artificial being—grafted and forced—and deeply morally and biologically transformed from the very beginning; but because of this she is also able to reflect on her relations with others and her environment, and to mark (in this case, tragically) a new ethical frontier. While Hawthorne's story is somewhat overdetermined by the stark play with both sin and death of the Christian allegories that provided his model, it offers a striking allegorical figuration of human biological plasticity, and its relation to both mores and environments, which anticipates and perhaps even reshapes our current thinking on the ethics of experimentation.

## Artificial Beings and Human Potential

This story's allegorical features and its themes of scientific knowledge, experimentation, and ethical responsibility grant it a generic and topical affinity with science fiction. The *Wesleyan Anthology of Science Fiction* (Evans *et al.* 2010) includes "Rappaccini's Daughter" as its earliest story, categorizing it with other stories about "Artificial/Posthuman Lifeforms." Meanwhile, it was first published in 1844, the same year as Edgar Allen Poe's "The Balloon-Hoax," another key forerunner of science fiction (as Matthew Wolf-Meyer points out in his [introduction to this series](#)). By contrast with "The Balloon-Hoax," however, which treats as-yet impossible technological heroics *as-if* they were tangible, present actualities, Hawthorne's story can be seen as a forerunner of another path for speculative fiction: he builds a self-contained textual world, not an illusionistically referential one, an artificial atmosphere of romance in which to test the murky moral and political parameters of a newly-powerful regime of knowledge, and in which to try to define some real, present political limits to the authority of science with its capacity both to heal and to harm (on Hawthorne's adoption of romantic literary modes as a means of commentary upon and engagement with the American "reality of [his] present," see Bell 2005: 17; on his relation to the scientific innovations of his day, see Anastasaki 2011).

At the outset, it is important to note that "Rappaccini's Daughter" is only one—though perhaps the best, as it was in the judgment of Henry James (1879)—of a suite of Hawthorn's "tales" that all feature experiments and cold, disinterested observers (the collection *The Celestial Railroad* includes all the stories discussed here, and I cite throughout from this volume). Together, these stories can easily be read to point at the moral dangers of meddling with natural processes, whether the basic animal course of life and growth or the natural laws that govern human intercourse. For example, in "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment" (first published in 1837), a magi invites his friends to sip an elixir that he claims is water from the true Fountain of Youth of explorer's legends, and yet he does not partake himself and instead sits by observing their increasing folly (as they become youthful and amorous again) and their disillusion as the effects wear off. In "The Birthmark" (1843), a devoted husband exerts all the powers of his science to remove a birthmark from his wife's cheek, in order to consummate the perfection that her face almost achieves but for the blemish (which, of course, in other estimations heightens rather than mars her beauty). Although his treatments are successful in their narrow objective of removing the birthmark, his wife dies in her submission to them, leaving her a perfect, lifeless object. On the way to this denouement, the wife accepts her husband's revulsion, staring at herself in mirrors and coming, ultimately, to prefer death at his hands to living on with her own natural imperfection.

This last story also includes one of Hawthorne's most explicit descriptions of the moral to be drawn from such tales of arrogant scientists. He writes that medical science's dealings with nature, "our great creative Mother," are limited by nature's own rights over life: "She permits us, indeed, to mar, but seldom to mend, and, like a jealous patentee, on no account to make" (224). In a later story, "Ethan Brand" (1851) Hawthorne expands this natural limitation as a moral principle, and has the protagonist declaim against the "sin of an intellect that has triumphed over the sense of brotherhood with man and reverence to god, and sacrificed everything to its own mighty claims!" (302).

From the beginning of the tale, "Rappaccini's Daughter" seems to be setting up a similar moral, somewhere between the narrowly legalistic notions of ownership and propriety rights of the former and the transcendent ethical obligation of the latter. Before getting into how it subverts these expectations, let me summarize the story, and highlight its overt moral intentions.

### **In The Scientist's Garden**

The story of "Rappaccini's Daughter" begins with all the right trappings of romance: it takes place in Italy, in an indeterminate past, and features a young adventurer. Giovanni, a young man of great personal beauty, arrives in Padua to begin medical studies, and finds himself in lodgings overlooking a garden that belongs to the great scientist Rappaccini. From his window, Giovanni observes the scientist—an old man, whose face "could never have expressed much warmth of heart"—and his beautiful daughter, Beatrice, tending their strange and fascinating plants with, respectively, caution and ardor. Rappaccini inspects the plants with "intentness" and "distrust," masking his face from the fragrance of the flowers, while Beatrice plucks the blooms and holds them close, appearing to Giovanni almost like a sister to the most splendid of the plants in the garden, which grows in a shattered, but still working, classical fountain (242-46).

Over the next few days, Giovanni watches Beatrice from his window and observes that the plants she tends and even her very presence seem to have a fatal effect on the insects and small creatures in the garden. In search of more knowledge about this strangely attractive woman and her relations both paternal and botanical, Giovanni visits his tutor Professor Baglioni, who tells him that Rappaccini is indeed a great scientist, but that there are "certain grave objections to his professional character [. . .]—that he cares infinitely more for science than for mankind." Rappaccini is notorious for dangerous experiments with poisonous plants, Baglioni

warns, and his daughter, too, has been taught great knowledge of deadly poisons (247). We readers learn, at this point, that Baglioni and Rappaccini are long-time rivals, and disagree over fundamentals of theory, but Giovanni remains ignorant of this relationship between them. Concerned by Giovanni's growing fascination with his rival, Baglioni vows to use all the "arcana of [his] medical science" to preserve his young charge from danger.

Upon his return to his rooms, Giovanni is once again drawn to his window. Beatrice sees him and is, in turn, enraptured by his beauty. Giovanni throws a fresh bouquet of flowers that is on his desk to Beatrice as a tribute. As she quickly turns away and retreats inside he thinks he sees his gift withering in her very hands. Giovanni is left in doubt, and pursues a long and fevered internal debate about what he has seen, and what this makes him feel: "It was not love, although her rich beauty was a madness to him; nor horror, even while he fancied her spirit to be imbued with the same baneful essence that seemed to pervade her physical frame; but a wild offspring of both love and horror." Hawthorne's narrator editorializes here: "Blessed are all simple emotions, be they dark or bright! It is the lurid intermixture of the two that produces the illuminating blaze of the infernal regions" (253).

Tortured by his doubt and desire, Giovanni accepts an invitation from his landlady to be shown—for a price—a hidden entrance to Rappaccini's garden. Upon gaining entry to the garden, Giovanni cannot but "critically" inspect the plants there. They are all "fierce, passionate, and even unnatural," and appear to be the product of an artificial "commixture and, as it were, adultery of various vegetable species" such that they are no longer "God's making, but the dreadful offspring of man's depraved fancy, glowing only with an evil mockery of beauty" (257-58). The text says it plainly: "They were probably the result of an experiment."

But Giovanni is interrupted in his speculations, once again, by Beatrice and her beauty, and an idyll follows of strangely bounded love. Giovanni and Beatrice now meet daily in the garden, but never touch and never kiss, and she warns him away from the great purple plant in the fountain at the center of the garden. Yet her concern for him only cements their bond. Hawthorne describes Giovanni's thoughts, reflecting on their encounters, as simply this: "She was human," after all (261).

Of course, like all idylls, this one cannot last. Giovanni feels himself transformed by his love of Beatrice, emboldened to be close to her. But then the awful truth is finally revealed by a visit from Baglioni, who says he has been reading "classic authors" and stumbled upon the story of a "Indian princess" who was turned by her father into a poisonous virago and given as a gift to the conqueror Alexander the Great, in order to

destroy her father's enemy by seducing, infecting, and thus killing him (264). Giovanni is forced to rethink all that has transpired: Beatrice has endeavored to protect him from her father's poisonous plants, to be sure, but has also kept herself apart from him, chastely. What if the daughter was herself a subject of her father's science and carried his synthetic poisons within her?

Baglioni, happily, says he has devised an antidote that may yet save Beatrice from her father's cold and scientific experimentation upon his own daughter. He sends Giovanni to the garden to administer the antidote, and reflects to himself as he gazes down from the young man's room "We will thwart Rappaccini yet . . . a vile empiric . . . not to be tolerated by those who respect the good old rules of the medical profession" (267).

Giovanni is as yet unconvinced, and resolves to "institute some decisive test" before coming to a final judgment about Beatrice, whether she is as she appears—pure and virtuous—or rather the source of terrible and fatal contagion, and perhaps even enmeshed in some plot with her father against him. He pauses to satisfy himself, by inspecting his own beautiful face in a mirror, that at least he himself has not yet been infected by the poison she may contain. His beauty, he is happy to see, is still intact. To make a further, final test he breathes upon a spider, and to his horror it promptly dies.

Giovanni rushes into the garden and violently accuses Beatrice of evil intentions and schemes to infect him with her vileness, pressing her to explain his own now fatal breath. Beatrice reveals to him that the hopes and fears he has struggled with are *all* true, but not as he expected: Beatrice is human, indeed, and loves Giovanni, and yet is also the product of her father's craft and innately poisonous, like the plants in his garden. She says to Giovanni, "at the hour when I first drew breath, this plant sprang from the soil, the offspring of his science, his intellect, while I was but his earthly child. . . . I grew up and blossomed with the plant and was nourished with its breath. It was my sister, and I loved it with a human affection" (270-71). But, she continues, "Alas! . . . There was an awful doom, . . . the effect of my father's fatal love of science, which estranged me from all society."

Giovanni is thunderstruck, and rages against her for causing his infection with this terrible stuff: "Accursed one! . . . Poisonous thing! . . . Thou hast blasted me!" Beatrice protests that it is her father's science that is to blame, and he repents and presses Baglioni's antidote upon her, hoping thus to lead them both back to "ordinary nature." But the balance between them has shifted. For her part, Beatrice knows how deeply the poison runs in her, and that Baglioni's antidote will likely kill her; while Hawthorne's narrator tells us that Giovanni's hopes are now in vain,

though he “did not know it,” “after such deep love had been so bitterly wronged as was Beatrice’s love by Giovanni’s blighting words!” (273).

Stung by Giovanni’s accusations and doubt, Beatrice makes to drink the antidote down, but her father appears and admonishes them not to spurn the gift he has given them both. He explains that Giovanni is now impervious to the poison, and that she and he can pursue their lives together. “My precious daughter,” he says, “thou art no longer lonely in the world.” Moreover, both now stand apart from common men and women. “Pass on, then, through the world, most dear to one another and dreadful to all besides!” Beatrice rejects this option of joining society only to be feared, not loved, as in fact the substance of her “doom” and drinks the antidote, dying at the feet of both her lover, Giovanni, who has so misunderstood her and her fate, and her father, who has wrought it all. In an ambiguous twist, as she dies Beatrice accuses Giovanni of the greatest culpability for her death. “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?” (274).

There is one further, final note to be struck: the source of the truly poisonous experimental product that finally takes Beatrice from the world is not there in the garden with them—it is Baglioni with his “antidote,” who exults over the scene of her death from Giovanni’s window above, calling out “Rappaccini! Rappaccini! and *this* is the upshot of your experiment!” (275). And on this cry, the story ends.

In many respects, “Rappaccini’s Daughter” neatly conforms to the somewhat “stiff and mechanical” (James’s phrase) allegorical template of Hawthorne’s other stories: Rappaccini is typecast from the first as the “cold observer” who cares more for knowledge than for his own daughter; Giovanni’s hope of a cure for Beatrice and his naïve conviction in his own invulnerability conspire to cause the ruin of his patient/loved; Baglioni’s professional jealousy and (perhaps) limited skill combine in his unlicensed admixture of poisons in his so-called antidote. Overall, it is the “rules of the medical profession” that seem ultimately to be upheld by the narrative. And yet in the dense last few pages, the allegory doubles back on itself and the apparent exemplars of disinterested, albeit differently skilled, science (Rappaccini, Baglioni) or overemotional care (Giovanni) are shown to share in the others’ apparent motivations, and to be equally compromised in their intermingling of love, knowledge, and self-interest (recall, perhaps, what Hawthorne says about the simple emotions and the terrible power of their more complex admixtures).

In his final speech to his daughter Rappaccini asks her if it would have been preferable to be only a “weak woman, exposed to all evil and capable of none” (274). His experimentation upon her is, at last, motivated

not by a disinterested love of science but rather by an all-too interested love of power, a desire to make his offspring “as terrible as . . . beautiful.” Subsequently, to deal with the consequences of this, he expands his experiment to include her lover, Giovanni. Throughout, paternal love—not soulless unconcern for humanity—motivates his experimentation. There are echoes, here, perhaps of debates over the extremities to which experimental therapies and even simple life support may be taken, in pursuit of more life for our loved ones.

Baglioni is also, in addition to being a professor of medical science, a “bad” father and a transgressor of ethical limits: a surrogate father to Giovanni (he protests throughout that he is a dear old friend of Giovanni’s father), he too engages in unlicensed experimentation on human subjects (as it were), and ultimately his actions are just as “poisonous” as Rappaccini’s, if not more so. Whether he acts in full knowledge that his antidote will kill Beatrice or not, he justifies his own moral breaches by reference to Rappaccini’s own lack of respect for the rules of their shared profession. Thus, while Rappaccini’s “greatness” allows him to carve out his own private moral terrain for experimentation, Baglioni’s envious (and mediocre) invocation of the “rules” ends up licensing his own morally-debased experimentation; he masks his deep and unacknowledged self-interest with high claims on behalf an abstracted humanity and appeals to professional rules.

### **The Broken Fountain**

Rappaccini and Baglioni both offer instructively compromised moral figures, particularly in relation to contemporary anthropological work in bioethics. A significant body of anthropological work has shown how certain bodies are made “available” to experimentation not in breach of, but rather through the negotiation of ethical boundaries, which latter are themselves shaped by policy techniques that allow them to be redrawn in the name of pressing need, or in pragmatic recognition of disparate regimes of value and fundamental laws in different places. I am thinking, here, of Lawrence Cohen’s theorization of “bioavailability” in relation to Indian kidney donation, Sheila Jasanoff’s examination of “narrative frames” that shape bioethical regimes, and the kind of “ethical variability” that Adriana Petryna has tracked across the global medical trials industry.

But such direct, ethical relevance may conceal another aspect of the allegory here, one which refers us to a more fundamental inquiry into human ontology and its biological and social plasticity. This is best approached by returning briefly to the beginning, and appreciating the textual play which Hawthorne is engaging in, especially in relation to his

other moral fables.

The story, in fact, comes with a short preface that is often not reproduced when it is anthologized as a pedagogical text (it is left out in the *Wesleyan Anthology*, for instance). Subtling his story “From the Works of Aubépine,” Hawthorne offers it as a mere translation of a typical tale by a minor French moralist. This prolific author, Aubépine, is said to have attracted less attention than is perhaps his due because of his “inveterate love of allegory,” which “is apt to . . . steal away the human warmth out of his conceptions” (239). However, after a “somewhat wearisome perusal” of his “startling catalogue of volumes,” Hawthorne deigns to present one story as worthy of attention, especially because of its previous publication in a French journal that has been foremost in the defense of “liberal principles” (241).

This is, of course, a literary frame and not meant to be taken sincerely: Aubépine’s putative works are just French renderings of the titles of Hawthorne’s own previous publications, and “aubépine” is the French name for the hawthorn bush. Hawthorne’s mention of the French journal is an elaborate compliment to his own publisher. Yet the preface, with its critical opposition of allegory and realism, fable and moral utility, also serves to signal Hawthorne’s own serious allegorical purposes: *both* to sequester the imaginative world which follows (as itself a kind of experimental garden) and to unleash contemporary speculation beyond its rather narrow bounds.

The literary critic Paul de Man argued some years ago that in Romantic literature allegorical modes were pervasively dismissed as outmoded (as they are by Hawthorne’s preface) and yet routinely, even anxiously cited and deployed—reappearing, for instance, in the gardens of Rousseau’s *Nouvelle Héloïse*, which de Man shows were conscious echoes of the allegorical garden of the *Roman de la Rose*. This remaking of allegory by Romantic authors served a wider project of revealing the “authentically temporal” predicament of the human being. On this account of literary history, if allegory seems to present—like science fiction—“an ideal time that is never here and now but always a past or an endless future” (de Man 1983: 226), it also serves as a means to gauge and measure ongoing and present predicaments of the subject beset by forces he or she does not control. These are, in the Romantic period at least, historical forces that allegory can help figure (and, literarily, control) as ethical maturation or “social” progress. The important point to be drawn from this is that a self-consciously deployed allegory does not simply stage moralized oppositions between natural and artificial, pure and corrupted, rightfully owned and wrongfully appropriated, self-same and differentiated. It constructs a textual world that provides a vantage point from which to judge the temporal reworking of such oppositions, and their complex

combination in the course of ongoing historical being.

Indeed, unlike Hawthorne's other moral fables, "Rappaccini's Daughter" fails to point us toward clear and internally-articulated lessons about the human dangers of a narrowly intellectual search for perfect knowledge, or the risky quest to possess perfect beauty. By contrast, from preface to conclusion, it works to posit a more complex relation between knowledge and perfection, one in which a loss of moral perfection and of ontological closure (of "the" human, or the individual) is the cost of true knowledge.

The raising of the allegorical stakes, as it were, and the complexity of the resolution, are indicated, first, by the fact that *both* Beatrice and Giovanni are consistently described as surpassingly, inhumanly beautiful. Neither *searches* for perfect beauty (nor does either lose it), but both already possess it. This sets them off from their fictive world—like classical allegorical figures, distinguished by their exemplary function not by their narrative relations. Giovanni is explicitly said to have a "remarkable beauty of person," to possess "Grecian, rather than Italian" features, and he is allowed to look upon his own image in a mirror and appraise his own beauty with a certain amount of "vanity" (which will be his downfall) but no discernable irony (that is, we are not invited to doubt the beauty he sees). Beatrice's beauty serves, naturally, to motivate the narrative, but it is equally unquestioned, if more often evoked through metonymy than straight description. Her "silken garments," her voice "like a gush of music," and her fine manner all attest to her beauty; meanwhile, "all the young men in Padua are wild about [her]" Baglioni says at one point, "though not half a dozen have ever had the good hap to see her face" (248-49).

Second, in their physical distinction and sequestration from ordinary social worlds, both of these characters are in many ways like the cold observers of Hawthorne's other stories of disinterested experimentation. But there is a key difference: they are not impervious observers. Both are experimented *upon*, infected from outside, and transformed unwittingly, breaking the bounds of ordinary human artifice (as the fountain in the center of the garden is broken, or ruined), in order to become something new, beyond the common order of things. Importantly, neither changes in any natural or social ways in the course of the story (they do not age, lose their charms, or gain knowledge) but they are transformed. Beatrice and Giovanni are both opposed to "ordinary nature" and its processes in ways that make them into allegorical figures of human malleability, plasticity, and indeed vulnerability. In the last scene, both are emotionally labile as well as being biologically plastic, and importantly this vulnerability also has ethical implications: it demands exigent decisions about what counts as love or care, and the form of life one can sustain.

As with the first, bioethical, reading, there is another twist here, one which brings the problematic interrelation of knowledge with the pursuit of perfection most clearly into view. More interesting than speculation about whether Beatrice is a virago or a martyr, is the fact that she is acutely self-aware and alert to her environment. She explicitly speaks of her vulnerability to the smells and strange appearance of the flowers she tends, and disavows (perhaps cannily) any *scientific* knowledge of their properties. Beatrice stands for a form of self-knowledge with its own moral beauty, since it is *more intensely human*, but that is also what makes her uniquely vulnerable to death (there is no implication I think, at the end, that Giovanni will follow her in this act). That is, when she fully realizes the artificial and unnatural source of her own terrible perfection, and the as-it-were *asocial* causes and consequences of it, she chooses death in preference to maintaining an elevated and separated status here below. The wife in “The Birthmark” provides a partial forerunner to this resolution: by accepting death, these women achieve the perfection and plenitude of self which is denied to them as mere mortals, and yet this is the final sign of their true humanity, as opposed to the real artificiality of those who care for nothing natural (including death) and exult in human capability alone.

The beautiful and morally flawed artificial being, potentially perfectible and hence potentially all-powerful, is finally redeemed not by her natural imperfection but by her knowledgeable act of self-limitation, one which in fact depends upon her biological plasticity and vulnerability—it is an antidote to the poison that she has become that poisons her, after all. What Beatrice is able to do when she seizes this antidote and uses to act upon her own artificially-made substance is something that is finally beyond the most perfect being imaginable, whose cruel beauty could not encompass self-knowledge (recognition of its own destructiveness) or self-limitation, as any number of android *belle dames sans merci* in science fiction might attest. This reading also makes sense of Giovanni’s last, lingering gaze at himself in his mirror before he discovers—through an external test—that he, too, is infused by poison: his vain self-love and conviction of immunity provides the antitype to the vulnerable, redemptive figure of Beatrice. Far from thinking herself complete and self-sufficient (the image in the mirror), Beatrice understands her entanglement with the (limited) environment that is both herself and her other (recall her all-important explanation to Giovanni, that the plant in the garden has grown with her, and is her sister, and that she loved it with a “human love”).

In his literary preface, his framing device, Hawthorne is right to say of Aubépine’s story that there is little human in it. These characters are not so much *human* as they are sublime creations who serve an allegorical function in an all-too mechanical plot. But Beatrice becomes, surprisingly,

a tragic heroine and intensely human in the end, since she comes to her end through self-knowledge, and most importantly knowledge of her own transformations and transformability. None of the other characters do.

Read in full, from framing preface to tragic conclusion, neither nature nor moral rules remain unchallenged or unchanged in this story. Nature as the “jealous patentee” whom no human can approach is nowhere in evidence. Untinctured nature does not appear (save perhaps in the insects and cut flowers that Beatrice’s mere touch destroys). The only substantial sign of such a natural nature, unspoiled and pristine, lies in the Edenic immediacy and self-involvement of the two central figures’ initial ways of living. But if this is destroyed in the end it is not because of cold, disinterested knowledge but because of the necessary action of the most compromised, most poisoned figure of all. This is the “upshot” of the experiments at play here: it is not the experimenter who will “stop at nothing” (as Baglioni says of Rappaccini, with some dramatic irony) who must be brought within ethical limits, nor nature “herself” who will rebel against knowledge, but rather the process of experimentation itself that must be limited from within, by the experimental subject reckoning with her own, ongoing, and artificial creation.

Ultimately, this allegory, with all its literary tricks and framing devices, allows us a richer sense of the kinds of moral sense, and the self-knowledge, that we may need to govern regimes of experimentation in the ongoing present. Moreover, with all its ambiguous orchestration of moral tropes and allegorical figures, “Rappaccini’s Daughter” encourages one to approach these questions not by accepting static oppositions between the (poisonous) fruits of knowledge and (ethical) obligations to protect nature or society, but more rigorously through interrogation of the aesthetic and formal qualities of the practices—including practices of reading and storytelling—through which we think (and live) through such oppositions in time.

### Works cited

Anastasaki, Elena. 2011. “Leaps and bounds: Hawthorne’s strategies of poetic economy.” *Connotations* 21 (2-3): 177-197. Online:

<http://www.connotations.uni-tuebingen.de/anastasaki02123.htm>

Bell, Millicent, ed. 2005. *Hawthorne and the Real: Bicentennial Essays*. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press.

De Man, Paul. 1983. “The Rhetoric of Temporality.” In *Blindness and Insight*

Evans, Arthur B., Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr., Joan Gordon, Veronica Hollinger, Rob Latham, and Carol McGuirk, eds. 2010. *The Wesleyan Anthology of Science Fiction*. Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press.

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. 2006. *The Celestial Railroad and other stories*. New York: Signet Classics.

James, Henry. 1879. *Hawthorne*. London: Macmillan. Online document: [http://xroads.virginia.edu/~drbr/james\\_1.html](http://xroads.virginia.edu/~drbr/james_1.html)

[Leo Coleman](#) is Associate Professor of Anthropology at Hunter College, City University of New York. His book [A Moral Technology: Electrification as Political Ritual in New Delhi](#) is out now, from Cornell University Press. [leo.coleman@hunter.cuny.edu](mailto:leo.coleman@hunter.cuny.edu)

The *Speculative Health* series is edited by [Matthew Wolf-Meyer](#).

#### **AMA citation**

Coleman L. Beauty's Knowledge: Hawthorne's Moral Fable "Rappaccini's Daughter". *Somatosphere*. 2017. Available at: <http://somatosphere.net/2017/09/beautys-knowledge.html>. Accessed September 8, 2017.

#### **APA citation**

Coleman, Leo. (2017). *Beauty's Knowledge: Hawthorne's Moral Fable "Rappaccini's Daughter"*. Retrieved September 8, 2017, from Somatosphere Web site: <http://somatosphere.net/2017/09/beautys-knowledge.html>

#### **Chicago citation**

Coleman, Leo. 2017. Beauty's Knowledge: Hawthorne's Moral Fable "Rappaccini's Daughter". *Somatosphere*. <http://somatosphere.net/2017/09/beautys-knowledge.html> (accessed September 8, 2017).

#### **Harvard citation**

Coleman, L 2017, *Beauty's Knowledge: Hawthorne's Moral Fable "Rappaccini's Daughter"*, *Somatosphere*. Retrieved September 8, 2017, from <<http://somatosphere.net/2017/09/beautys-knowledge.html>>

#### **MLA citation**

Coleman, Leo. "Beauty's Knowledge: Hawthorne's Moral Fable

"Rappaccini's Daughter". 8 Sep. 2017. [Somatosphere](http://somatosphere.net). Accessed 8 Sep. 2017. <<http://somatosphere.net/2017/09/beautys-knowledge.html>>