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RAPPACCINI'S DAUGHTERS: HAWTHORNE, PAZ, AND REWRITING IN THE
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ABSTRACT

In the context of the Americas, questions of originality and influence form a particular set of artistic and political conundrums linked to the continents' problematic existence in the eyes of Europe since Columbus's first encounter. Classified by him as both the site of Earthly Paradise and a New World, the Americas oscillate between the antiquity of the classical dwelling place of the Hesperides and the Biblical Eden, and the perpetual novelty of Columbus's designation (O'Gorman 111). This contradictory embrace is compounded in the history of the relationship between the Western hemisphere and Western Europe, particularly in the formulations of inheritance and influence that accompanied independence movements in the former.¹ Fraught by such historical developments, the concept of rewriting in American literature implicates a set of interrelated political and artistic problems that revolve around derivation. The following essay will consider this dilemma through a comparative examination of two American works that explicitly embody a tension between repetition and invention: Nathaniel Hawthorne's 19th-century short story "Rappaccini's Daughter" (1844) and the play *La hija de Rappaccini* written by Octavio Paz in 1956.² Prominently written into Paz's 1956 play is a reference to the etching "El sueño de la razón produce monstruos," part of *Los caprichos* by 18th-century Spanish artist Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes. Because Paz's allusion to Goya was removed in the second version of his play, I will examine the specificity of its original conclusion in 1956 to consider

¹ Lois Parkinson Zamora's book *The Usable Past: The Imagination of History in Recent Fiction of the Americas* offers a thorough analysis on this topic.

² Some notable differences exist between the original version of the drama by Paz published in 1956 in *Revista mexicana de literatura* and performed that year by the theater group *Poesía en voz alta*, and the one that appears in the author's 1990 *Obra poética*. In order to focus on the relationship of the play to the specific formulations of national literature that contextualize and are affected by it, I will primarily consider the original version printed in 1956.

how the triangulation of artistic inheritance that is articulated through Paz's use of Hawthorne and Goya can be related to the political and cultural milieus of the 19th-century United States translated into 20th-century Mexico.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Hawthorne and Paz.....	1
Inheritance and Inevitability	3
Reception and Revisions.....	12
<i>Trama</i> and Drama	28
Works Cited.....	32

Hawthorne and Paz

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864) and Octavio Paz (1914-1998) are two of the most prolific American authors in the 19th and 20th centuries, respectively. In the face of strident contemporary debates on the concepts of nationalism, conflicts over borders and interventions, and the double-edged sword of distinguishing European influences from an indefinable “Americanism,” the two appear to have taken up divergent responses. Hawthorne’s ostensible political engagement, which includes his brief tenure in the Boston Custom House, his 1852 campaign biography of Franklin Pierce, and service as the United States Consul in Liverpool, England, is arguably minimal in contrast to that of Paz. Throughout his life, Paz wrote inexhaustibly about global affairs, histories, conflicts, and politics with a poetic and unsystematic critical eye, served as the Mexican ambassador to India, resigned from diplomatic service in protest of the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre, and won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1990.³

In spite of these differences, the story “Rappaccini’s Daughter” written by Hawthorne and recreated as a drama by Paz illuminates an inter-American channel of influence that connects not only these two authors, but with them their attendant political and cultural situations, in that those situations appear in and inform their particular constructions of this tale. Therefore, the connection between Hawthorne and Paz through the narration of “Rappaccini’s Daughter” is significant both for its existence “in spite of” the authors’ differences and also because it

³ While Hawthorne’s work on Pierce’s biography and subsequent service in England came towards the end of his life, Paz was actively engaged in national and international political and cultural activities from early on, being one of the youngest attendees at the 1937 Second *Congreso Internacional de Escritores e Intelectuales Antifascistas para la Defensa de la Cultura* [*International Congress of Anti-fascist Writers and Intellectuals for the Defense of Culture*] held in Spain. See Yvonne Grenier’s article “Octavio Paz and the Changing Role of Intellectuals in Mexico” for more on the leading part Paz often took among contemporary intellectuals.

compounds those differences and conveys distinct possibilities for reviewing 19th- and 20th- century movements regarding the formation of identities and literatures that were (or would be) quintessentially American. In the following analysis of the trajectory of “Rappaccini’s Daughter,” I will seek to elaborate on how Hawthorne’s “Rappaccini’s Daughter” and Paz’s *La hija de Rappaccini* challenge the parameters of contemporary debates on national politics, culture, and the possibilities of creating “national literature.”

Inheritance and Inevitability: Forgotten Genealogies in Hawthorne's "Rappaccini's Daughter"

The original version of Hawthorne's story as it was published in the December 1844 issue of *The United States Magazine and Democratic Review*⁴ includes a preface entitled "Writings of Aubépine." This short introductory text claims that the succeeding story was originally published in *La revue Anti-aristocratique* by a Monsieur Aubépine, who "occup[ies] an unfortunate position between the Transcendentalists and the great body of pen-and-ink men who address the intellect and sympathies of the multitude" (545). *Aubépine*, French for "hawthorn," was one of many pseudonyms employed by Hawthorne, just as the presentation of Aubépine's supposed corpus is a listing in French of works previously published by Hawthorne.⁵ "Rappaccini's Daughter," then, is presented in the magazine as the translated reprinting of an extant work. The technique of maneuvering and rephrasing the role of "author" in terms of archival research and retelling was already a characteristic feature of Hawthorne's work: *Twice-Told Tales* had been published in 1837, itself the compilation of sketches that had already been told in various magazines to which Hawthorne contributed.

However, a notable particularity in the textual history established by the introduction of "Rappaccini's Daughter" is the implication that this story is not only a retelling, but an interpreted French import. In contrast, in February of 1842, two years before the debut of

⁴ During the years of its publication, this journal was also called *The United States Democratic Review*. It will be subsequently noted according to the title of the journal in the issue specific to each article under discussion.

⁵ John R. Mellow notes that "Hawthorne had spent part of the summer of 1837 with his friend Horatio Bridge in Augusta, Maine, and there had taken French lessons from a Monsieur Schaeffer who had bestowed French names on his students: Bridge was Monsieur du Pont, Hawthorne was Monsieur de l'Aubépine" (apud Moore 82).

Hawthorne's "Rappaccini's Daughter," a review of *Twice-Told Tales* that appeared in *The United States Democratic Review* praised Hawthorne for the local economy of that tome, noting:

[Hawthorne] has not imported his literary fabrics, nor made them after patterns, to be found in either obscure or noted foreign warehouses. From his own mind, with the accumulated experiences of New England life—he draws his inspiration. It is from New England history and social existence that he derives his hints and materials. New England traditions, New England incidents, New England customs, New England manners, are the staples of his productions. (198)

In contrast to the commended autochthony of *Legends of the Province House and Other Twice-Told Tales*, "Rappaccini's Daughter" explicitly states its derivation from a multiplicity of "foreign warehouses." The supposed author is an obscure foreign writer, and as we will see, the literary genealogy contained within the tale is an amalgamation of obscure, noted, contemporary and ancient traditions. Consequently, the tale is not only an imported retelling, but a compilation of recast global "literary fabrics."

After the introduction of the text and its attribution to the French Aubépine, the narrator of the imported story "Rappaccini's Daughter" moves the recounting to Northern Italy, introducing the protagonist as "a young man, Giovanni Guasconti by name" who has come from Naples to study medicine at the University of Padua (37). While Aubépine is a somewhat transparent heteronym for Hawthorne, and *La revue anti-Aristocratique* refers to *The United States Magazine and Democratic Review*, the Italian genealogy of retold tale is more clearly extrinsic to the North American context of the story's publication. Appropriate to the setting, Guasconti himself is genealogically connected to Dante's *Commedia*. As he is entering his lodgings in Padua, the narrative persona relates that "[t]he young stranger, who was not

unstudied in the great poem of his country, recollected that one of the ancestors of this family, and perhaps an occupant of this very mansion, had been pictured by Dante as a partaker of the immortal agonies of his Inferno” (546). Indirectly then, Hawthorne’s tale has arrived in *The United States Democratic Review* through an obscure French author’s short story, which in turn is physically and allusively located within the canonical Italian epopee.

These gestures towards French and Italian instances of occidental literary tradition sublimate into Biblical allusions when Giovanni’s landlady Lisabetta introduces the youth to his new lodgings and calls his attention to the garden overlooked by his rooms. The enclosure, she informs him, is tended by the famous Doctor Rappaccini and his daughter. After Lisabetta takes her leave, Giovanni contemplates the garden, and “judge[s] it to be one of those botanic gardens, which were of an earlier date in Padua than elsewhere in Italy, or in the world” (546). However, the parallelism between the Garden of Eden and the garden of Rappaccini is not untainted. The narrator immediately places the prelapsarian resemblance of this space into question by pointing out the ruins of a marble fountain in the center of the garden, “so wofully [sic] shattered that it [is] impossible to trace the original design from the chaos of the remaining fragments” (546). In this sense, the garden is a paradoxical space that represents both primordial innocence and irreparable damnation.⁶ Completing Giovanni’s contradictory observations of the garden is his notice of a statue of Vertumnus, “quite veiled and shrouded” by one of the plants (546). This presence, like that of the shattered fountain, reinforces the conflation of the garden’s antiquity

⁶ Lois Parkinson Zamora relates the enclosed nature of the garden with the fact that “nineteenth-century North American authors, with patriotic propaganda about the boundless west ringing in their ears, wrote obsessively about enclosure” and cites examples in works by Poe, Melville, and Faulkner (““A Garden Inclosed”” 324).

with its posteriority: the mythical Vertumnus has already invaded the private garden and now resides there in stone effigy, having tricked Pomona with his disguise as an old woman.⁷

The plurality of allusions evoked by the physical description of the garden is soon compounded by the entrance of characters that likewise embody numerous genealogies. The chaotic garden that will enclose the unfolding of Hawthorne's short story is not a divine creation, but a profane version, "the Eden of the present world," complete with its own mixture of God and Adam, the creator and the one castigated for his inquisitiveness: Rappaccini (547). The complement to the statue of Vertumnus, the Pomona-like figure within the garden, is substantiated in the entrance of Rappaccini's daughter, Beatrice. As the tale progresses, it becomes clear that Beatrice embodies the incongruous confluence of the multiple avatars and relationships that form the narrative. Her name and nationality recall Beatrice, Dante's guide through paradise; but in contrast to the purity of her namesake, Hawthorne's Beatrice shares a peculiar affinity with the experimental miscegenation that has produced all of the plants in her father's garden.⁸ Nedda Anhalt illustrates the complex malleability of Beatrice's characterization, considering her the compiled representation of classical and literary heroines who are subject to patriarchal agendas, including Galatea, Juliette, Cordelia, and Iphigenia. While the association of Pygmalion's Galatea with Beatrice is drawn by Anhalt to explore the relationship between a creative and controlling Rappaccini and an idealized fabrication made

⁷ See Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Book XIV. Vertumnus, a Roman god of seasonal change and flora, has the ability to alter his form. He uses this power to disguise himself as an old woman and enter the orchard tended by Pomona in order to seduce her.

⁸ See Ana Brickhouse's article, "Hawthorne in the Americas: Frances Calderón de la Barca, Octavio Paz, and the Mexican Genealogy of 'Rappaccini's Daughter.'" Brickhouse notes that "Beatrice herself is characterized as a self-described "sister" to the garden's crossbred / flowers who, like the hybrid girls who populate the racialized "faery ethnography" of mid-nineteenth-century Britain, exists in a taxonomic border area between human and nonhuman, European and non-European (231-232).

real, the other three literary prototypes further prefigure the fate of Beatrice, because they “mueren inocentes, mas cumpliendo su destino” ‘die as innocents, but fulfilling their destinies’ (278; my translation). The resonances drawn by Anhalt are indicative of more than the characterization of Beatrice or the relationships between the protagonists of Hawthorne’s story: the suggestion of “fulfilling destiny” concerns a central tension in “Rappaccini’s Daughter” between the attempts at literary novelty and experimentation and circumscription within multiple literary legacies.

This tension is most recognizably manifest in the character of Rappaccini, who declares his intentions to make Beatrice “as terrible as [she is] beautiful” rather than “a weak woman, exposed to all evil, and capable of none” (560). But rather than defying nature, Rappaccini reincarnates the original Biblical condemnation of Eve *par excellence*: he raises Beatrice in the garden and influences her relationship with a partner who will blame her as the “accursed one” who has produced his own tainting, just as Adam implicated Eve for his trespass in Genesis 3:12 (559).⁹ The pervasion of biblical and literary types in Hawthorne’s story forms an accretion of historical and worldly influences that sharply contrasts the autochthony that garnered the magazine’s earlier praise for *Twice-Told Tales*. At the same time, the inexorable nature of inheritance in “Rappaccini’s Daughter” is structurally linked to a decisive act of forgetting on the part of the characters with regard to their provenance.

This decisive act of forgetting that brings the literary fates of the characters to their fulfillment takes place at the center of the story. After his first brief, spoken encounter with Beatrice, Giovanni develops an obsession with her and, despite the warnings of his mentor Baglioni, accepts Lisabetta’s offer to lead him to “a private entrance into the garden” (552).

⁹ “The man said, ‘The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate.’”

Textually, Giovanni descends into the garden to meet Beatrice on page 552 of the original publication, the printed midpoint between the preface and the coda. Developmentally, this descent occurs after Giovanni has observed or encountered each of his fellow characters twice, and clearly has had the opportunity, as described by the narrative persona, to cultivate his early suspicions and conjectures about each one. And structurally, Giovanni's descent is perpetrated in the palace that he knows is tied to Dante's *Inferno*. Thus, as Anhalt notes, "lo simétrico se cumple con la alusión a uno de los antepasados de Giovanni, un hombre que habitó en ese mismo palacio y fue modelo de Dante para describir las agonías del *Infierno*" "the symmetrical is fulfilled through the allusion to one of the ancestors of Giovanni, who lived in that same palace and was a model for Dante in describing the agonies of the *Inferno*' (277). And yet, Giovanni willingly follows Lisabetta, who is likened to "a grotesque carving in wood, darkened by centuries" towards a meeting with Beatrice, "obey[ing] the law that whirl[s] him onward, in ever-lessening circles, towards a result which he [does] not attempt to foreshadow" (552). In this case, Giovanni doesn't need to foreshadow the result of his precipitation: in the highly symmetrical moment of his descent he is insinuating himself in the multiple traditions that converge in Rappaccini's garden and his own pedigree, "thrusting himself into an incalculable position" by ignoring, and thus fulfilling, the determinism of his inheritance.

The critical accumulation of allusions along with the characters' simultaneous recognition and willful forgetfulness of their circumscribed roles marks a significant departure from the local economy of Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales*, which had received such approbation from *The United States Democratic Review* for its local focus. In fact, the appearance of "Rappaccini's Daughter" in the *Review* seems to directly contradict the programmatically nationalistic character of the journal. The first volume of the *Review* advertises its mission as that

of disseminating information about the “purity” of the American democratic principle, specifically as the unique property of the Democratic-Republican Party. A related concern of the author of the introduction is to pose the magazine’s aim in terms of a “national literature.” Central to this new literature is the casting off of previous literary models, particularly British ones, which have led to the creation of a canon in the United States that is termed the “diluted and tardy second edition of English thought” (15). In the final pages of the introduction the author asserts that:

We have a principle – an informing soul – of our own, our democracy, though we allow it to languish uncultivated; this must be the animating spirit of our literature, if, indeed, we would have a national American literature. There is an immense field open to us, if we would but enter it boldly and cultivate it as our own. All history has to be re-written. (14)

Of course, rewriting renders the tales transhistorical, positive links between the situation of the source material and the moment of its reiteration. The resultant impossibility of re-writing history as novelty is critically explored through the narration of works such as Hawthorne’s *Twice-Told Tales*.

One of the *Twice-Told Tales* in particular incorporates the aporia of this epistemological project into the preoccupation for distinguishing the culture of the United States from English derivation. “Lady Eleanore’s Mantle,” an installment in the series *Tales from the Province House*¹⁰ published in *The United States Democratic Review* just a few years before the publication of “Rappaccini’s Daughter,” is narrated by a self-described “humble note-taker.” In the course of his visits to the historic Province House in Boston, this narrator has the opportunity to hear stories about the tensions between the citizens of a post-colonial United States and their

¹⁰ The tale was published as a part of that series and then collected into the volume of *Twice-Told Tales*.

British and loyalist counterparts. The tale of Lady Eleanore, who arrives in North America from England, serves as a foil to the later “Rappaccini’s Daughter.” The bare elements of the plot are strikingly similar: a poisonous woman enraptures those around her, in this case spreading illness not only through a cursed article of clothing but also her own “sinful pride” (323). Finally, Lady Eleanore herself succumbs to the plague she has generated.

The resonances between “Lady Eleanore’s Mantle” and “Rappaccini’s Daughter” permit a close examination of some of their differences, one of which is the way that multiple narrators and storytellers shape each tale. The story of “Lady Eleanore’s Mantle” is related by an “old loyalist,” whose story is contained within the description of another narrator (the “humble note-taker”) listening to that story in the Province House. However, this second narrator filters the loyalist’s story through his own political leanings as a “thorough-going democrat.”¹¹ By presenting these influences self-consciously, “Lady Eleanore’s Mantle” undertakes the objectives outlined for the *Review*. That is, it not only censures a British colonialism linked to pride and infectious influence, but also self-reflexively examines the problem of narrating this moral criticism, literally “re-writing history” through the voice of a storyteller who foregrounds his political leanings.

In contrast to this form of filtered rewriting, “Rappaccini’s Daughter,” stresses its nature as already written, both in terms of the literary genealogies sketched within the narration and the introduction’s presentation of the text itself: Aubépine’s tale has merely been transplanted and translated into the *Review* from its cognate French *Revue*, without the programmatically filtered rewriting encouraged by the magazine’s nationalistic agenda. This draws out the paradox of the Democratic project as it is delineated in the journal: in proposing to abrogate the influences of

¹¹ This self description is provided in another one of Hawthorne’s *Tales from the Province House*, “Old Esther Dudley” (51).

the past by “re-writing” all of history, this project is decidedly circular. Such circularity, like the “ever-lessening circles” through which Giovanni descends into Rappaccini’s garden, is based on a reductive amnesia: the history to be re-written in the new North American literary tradition is that of colonial Britain. However, as demonstrated through the willful forgetfulness of Hawthorne’s characters before a multiplicity of admonitory inherited fates, literary invention can be both recalcitrant towards and circumscribed within its predecessors in one and the same act by reproducing their fates. Moreover, the superabundance of global historical references in “Rappaccini’s Daughter” provides a counterpoint to the political motivations of the journal by demonstrating the perils of historical amnesia, myopia, and ignorance, perils that structurally and thematically hinge on Giovanni’s descent into Rappaccini’s garden.

Reception and Revisions: Paz, Hawthorne, and Goya

In 1956, Octavio Paz adapted Hawthorne's 19th-century twice-told tale as a play to be retold by the theatrical group *Poesía en voz alta*.¹² The play, comprised of one act divided into a prologue, nine scenes, and an epilogue, was first staged in July of 1956 and appeared that same year in the September-October issue of *Revista Mexicana de literatura*. *La hija de Rappaccini* was among four plays put on by *Poesía en voz alta* at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México: the other four, *Le salon de l'automobile* by Ionesco, *Oswald et Zénaïde ou Les Apartés* by Jean Tardieu, and *Le canari* by Georges Neveux, were all translated by Paz for the cycle (Isabini-Pouchin 139). In contrast to these translations, *La hija de Rappaccini* was written specifically for the group. Adding to its singularity, this work is the only theatrical piece Paz published in the course of his life.

Paz's theatrical version renders Hawthorne's storyline faithfully: Juan and Beatriz meet and Juan gradually acquires Beatriz's poisonous humors. After hearing the unsettling insinuations of Baglioni, Juan tests and confirms his toxicity. He confronts Beatriz in the garden, bringing a tonic that Baglioni has claimed will work as an antidote to the couple's condition, and after a heated confrontation with Beatriz, convinces her to drink it. Despite this literal fidelity, the recasting of "Rappaccini's Daughter" bears the hallmark of Paz's aesthetic and intellectual inclinations, synthesizing, as Isabini-Pouchin notes, "su lado surrealista, su búsqueda por el origen, la analogía que se establece entre la creación poética y el acto erótico – ambos

¹² See Roni Unger's extensive study, *Poesía en Voz Alta in the theater of Mexico* for more on the membership, program, and cycles of performances staged by the group.

relacionados con los movimientos cósmicos – y su concepto de poesía universal” “his surrealist side, his search for origins, the analogy established between poetic creation and the erotic act – both related to cosmic movements – and his concept of universal poetry” (140). One particularly notable element in Paz’s recreation¹³ of Hawthorne’s work comprises shifts in characterizations that reframe the inherited moral conditions of Hawthorne’s characters in terms of ambiguity. For instance, Rappaccini is no longer Hawthorne’s cold and purely intellectual scientist, but a conflicted and sympathetic figure. When Beatriz laments her isolation in the garden, Rappaccini tells her, “Hija, no llores. Soy demasiado sensible y no puedo ver sufrir a los demás. Me bebería tus lágrimas” “Daughter, don’t cry. I am sensitive and cannot bear to see others suffer. I would drink your tears” (10). This line presents a characterization of the doctor that is distinctly more sympathetic than Hawthorne’s, and at the same time illustrates the process of rewriting through a dramatic chiasmus: in Hawthorne’s version, it is Baglioni who invites Giovanni to “drink off your glass of Lachryma,” after discovering Giovanni’s interest in Beatrice (549). This reflective inversion points to a central aspect in Paz’s recreation: transformations rendered in the play bear the traces of their reconstruction.

In this manner, Paz’s play develops as a study of the poetics of rewriting, just as Hawthorne’s twice-told story dramatizes the tenuous relationship between lineage and memory. The resultant ambiguities, such as the one surrounding the characterization of Rappaccini, form a central feature of the differences between Hawthorne’s and Paz’s works. However, in the praxis of rewriting employed by Paz, the ambiguity inscribed in the 1956 version of the play is not a diametric counterpoint to Hawthorne’s emphasis on moral inheritance. Rather, it amplifies this

¹³ Emilio Carballido questions the application of the term “adaptation” to Paz’s “La hija,” concluding that “[c]rear una forma nueva para una anécdota existente es, simplemente, crear” [to create a new form for an existing anecdote is, simply, to create] (233).

inheritance as circumscription unmitigated by choice on the part of the protagonists. For instance, in Hawthorne's story, Giovanni's descent into the garden is described in terms that resonate with the genealogical implications of his choice. In contrast, Paz's Juan simply "se asoma al balcón; decidido, da un salto y cae en el jardín" 'leans out of the balcony; determined, he jumps off and lands in the garden' (15). Key in this brief passage, which precedes the first face-to-face meeting between Juan and Beatriz, is the word "decidido" read as a participial adjective. In Hawthorne's story, as Giovanni followed Lisabetta into the garden, "there came across him a sudden doubt whether this intense interest on his part were not delusory; whether it were really of so deep and positive a nature as to justify him in now thrusting himself into an incalculable position" (552). In contrast to the doubt of this Giovanni and his election to continue after Lisabetta in spite of such hesitations, Paz's Juan is "determined," in a way that summarizes the sense of ambiguity in Paz's *La hija de Rappaccini*: the moral judgments passed by Hawthorne's narrator cannot be applied here, not because of perversity or relativism, but rather, because no choices are made. Juan's "determination" refigures the ramifications of Giovanni's choice to willfully ignore and therefore fulfill his loaded literary genealogy: Juan's fateful jump into the garden is not chosen but already "determined," even "predetermined" by his circumscription within a rewritten tale.

The relationship between circumscribed determination and ambiguity exemplifies the way in which Paz's *La hija de Rappaccini*, like Hawthorne's *Rappaccini's Daughter* engages with questions of inheritance and iteration in the literary history of the Americas. Paz composed his *La hija de Rappaccini* in an environment of intellectual activity that resonates with the same kind of reflexive concerns circulating in the moment in which Hawthorne had written his tale.

Revista Mexicana de literatura, like *The United States Magazine and Democratic Review*,

frequently published articles that expounded and reflected upon the relationship of artistic and intellectual creation to the articulation of a geopolitically charged agenda. For instance, in his article “La literatura Mexicana,” published in the July-August issue of the magazine in 1956 (the same year as the publication of Paz’s play), Fausto Vega writes that:

Es lamentable que tengamos que consultar, por ejemplo, en lo que respecta a la novela mexicana, libros extranjeros más útiles por su pretensión sistemática y teórica aun cuando se funden en aserciones de críticos compatriotas que no quisieron o no pudieron desenvolver las consecuencias de sus puntos de vista.
(660)

It is lamentable that we should have to consult, for example, with respect to the Mexican novel, foreign books more useful for their systematic and theoretical aims, even when they are founded on the assertions of Mexican critics who could not or did not want to uncover the consequences of their points of view.

Vega’s argument presupposes a discrete relationship between literary production and criticism as national phenomena. However, just as Hawthorne’s “Rappaccini’s Daughter” challenges the program of creating a national literature and casting off transatlantic inheritance in the 19th-century United States, Paz’s *La hija de Rappaccini* questions the terms by which arguments like Vega’s are propounded.

Paz’s *La hija de Rappaccini* alters the coordinates of the kind of relationship described by Vega through a critical attention to rewriting that converts Hawthorne’s inherited *moral* choices into predetermined, “scripted” roles. Likewise, Paz’s play manifests a process of rewriting that

reflexively interrogates the affiliation of *literary* inheritance to the concepts of iteration and inversion. This interrogation is exemplified in a line delivered by Baglioni, the academic rival of Rappaccini. In Hawthorne's story, Baglioni attempts to convince Giovanni of the danger of Beatrice through an oblique reference to yet another thread of the network of inherited roles that pervade the work:

I have been reading an old classic author lately,' said he, 'and met with a story that strangely interested me. Possibly you may remember it. It is of an Indian prince, who sent a beautiful woman as a present to Alexander the Great...Alexander, as was natural to a youthful conqueror, fell in love at first sight with this magnificent stranger. But a certain sage physician, happening to be present, discovered a terrible secret in regard to her...[t]hat this lovely woman,' continued Baglioni, with emphasis, 'had been nourished with poisons from her birth upward, until her whole nature was so imbued with them, that she herself had become the deadliest poison in existence.' (556)

Baglioni presents this "classic tale" so that it resonates unmistakably with Giovanni's doubts concerning Beatrice, also nourished with poisons until she has become one. The doctor's warning underscores the genealogical emphasis of Hawthorne's play, invoking the necessity of a historical awareness that expands beyond national boundaries in an understanding of the complexity and extension of repeating histories and twice- or thrice-told tales.

In contrast, Paz's Baglioni never mentions the Indian ancestor of Beatriz. He does, however, condemn Rappaccini's garden with another citation that calls attention to the ways Paz's *La hija de Rappaccini* revises the theme of inheritance evoked by Hawthorne. Rather than

commenting on “a classic author,” Baglioni refers to the Spanish artist Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes (1746-1828). Upon discovering the cause of Juan’s fascination with Rappaccini, Baglioni comments briefly on Beatriz, quoting Hawthorne almost verbatim:

No conozco a esa muchacha. He oído decir que algunos jóvenes de Padua andan / locos por ella...aunque no se le acercan. También se dice que no sólo es un prodigio de belleza sino un pozo de ciencia, de modo que podría, a pesar de sus años, ocupar una cátedra en la Facultad. (Ríe). Acaso la mía...Pero dejemos estos estúpidos rumores. (13-14)

I don’t know the girl. I have heard it said that some young men in Padua are crazy about her...although they don’t approach her. I have also heard it said that she is not only a prodigy of beauty but also possessed of a deep knowledge of science, such that she could, despite her youth, occupy a chair in the Academy. (Laughs). Perhaps mine...but let’s forget about such stupid rumors.

Here the parallel with Hawthorne ends and Baglioni exclaims, as he looks again at the garden, “¡Lúgubre jardín, malsano monumento de un orgullo blasfemo! Lo dijo el español: la razón cría monstruos” ‘Miserable garden, sickly monument of a blasphemous pride. The Spaniard said it: reason breeds monsters’ (14). The antonomastic “español” is Goya, whose works have had an extensive influence on literary tradition in Europe and Latin America, and “la razón cría monstruos” is derived from the title of Goya’s “El sueño de la razón produce monstruos” [“The sleep of reason produces monsters”] the frontispiece to his series *Los caprichos* [*The Whims*;

alternately, *The Poetic Furors*].¹⁴ By incorporating Goya's etching into *La hija de Rappaccini*, Paz manipulates the terms "production" and "reproduction" through a recourse to the monstrous. In turn, this thematic manipulation is an integral part of the process of rewriting and as such, challenges contemporary arguments surrounding literature and/of the nation.

As a composition formed through the crafting together of multiple traditions, the construction of *La hija de Rappaccini* manifests the reproduction of these influences in the production of Paz's dramatic work. Even though it constitutes itself through reflective symmetry, the play still contains the vestiges of its incorporations, as exemplified through the literal translation of Hawthorne's title and more subtle chiasmic inversions such as the one created through Rappaccini's offer to drink Beatriz's tears. The poetic fusion of disparate parts is still defined by its analogue in the possibility of disjunctive *sparagmos*. This tension between amalgamation and disjunction find expression in the altered citation of Goya and the theme of the monstrous as an epistemological paradox. While Goya's transatlantic influence cannot be pinned down to a particular crossing, and was certainly widespread long before the publication of *La hija de Rappaccini* in 1956, Paz's reference to his "El sueño de la razón produce monstruos" has remarkable resonances with a series of lectures on the artist given by Spanish art critic Ricardo Gutiérrez Abascal (1888-1963; pseudonym Juan de la Encina) in Mexico and published by La Casa de España as *El mundo histórico y poético de Goya* in 1939.

Gutiérrez Abascal, who had been exiled from Spain in 1939, describes Goya's work in relation to both the artist's Spain and 20th-century Mexico. In one lecture entitled "El sueño de la

¹⁴ For examples of Goya's influence, see Antonio Buero Vallejo's play "El sueño de la razón," and Alejo Carpentier's *El siglo de las luces*, both of which invoke the titles of Goya's works. Similarly, Norman Willey's study "Ibsen and Goya" and Roy Boland's essay on Mario Vargas Llosa trace the thematic presence of Goya in works by Ibsen and Vargas Llosa, respectively.

razón,” Gutiérrez Abascal offers a description of the monstrous that engages the same type of probing criticism that informs Paz’s translation of Goya’s etching into theater. After first describing “el monstruo” in terms of epistemological uncertainty arising through encounters of European tradition with the “primitive” arts and civilizations of the Americas, the Orient, Oceania, and Africa, Gutiérrez Abascal contrapuntally asserts that Goya’s representation of the monstrous is in fact “de bien distinto linaje” [of a different lineage] driven by uncanny recognition and affinity with the subjects presented. In other words, Gutiérrez Abascal classifies Goya’s monsters as specimens of teratology, creatures whose origins are known and whose aberrations are therefore both alien and familiar (172). This trope in Goya’s work is also a key feature of the changes that Paz makes to Goya’s title, which illustrate Paz’s praxis of rewriting and provide a critical view of some of the contemporary contentions surrounding the engagement of artistic and intellectual activity with national political and cultural agendas.

In his 1957 article “The Mexican Literary Scene in 1956,” scholar Robert Mead notes a struggle similar to the one explicitly described in the editorial pieces of *The United States Democratic Review*, in which the spheres of literature and nationalism are the objects of adjustment and appropriation by two main groups, “champions of a narrow, almost chauvinistic nationalism” and “those universalists who defend the right of Mexican writers to a complete freedom of artistic creation and expression and the acceptance of influences from foreign authors and literatures” (39). While Paz has been generally considered to fall on the side of the universalists, his triangulation and modification of Spanish and North American influences in *La hija de Rappaccini* challenges the terms of the debate. As it is described in Mead’s article, the question revolves around the election by a Mexican author between the two distinct kinds of content and form, the national and the universal. However, some of the ways in which the project

was articulated at the time in fact propose a balance of these two concepts. For example, during the presidency of Miguel Alemán (1946-1952), the Bellas Artes Department of the Secretaría de Educación Pública was reestablished as the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes (IBNA). In her study “The Mexican Intelligentsia: 1950-1968: Cosmopolitanism, National Identity, and the State,” Deborah Cohn, citing the institute’s own 1950 publication, *Dos años y medio del IBNA I*, presents the ideological agenda of IBNA:

The goals that the IBNA set for itself reveal that it, too, was profoundly marked by the debate over nationalism and cosmopolitanism. Institutional reports identify these objectives as: ‘lograr una producción propia...informarse en una experiencia universal para mayor ensanchamiento de la propia personalidad...[e] impedir un localismo cerrado tanto como evitar la absorción de lo propio por lo ajeno’ ‘to achieve its own characteristic production...to be informed by universal experience for the greatest broadening of its own particular personality...[and] to both impede hermetic localism and avoid the absorption of the particular into the foreign’ (footnote on page 150; my translations).

Cohn further points to the programmatic ways that national or “characteristic,” and universal forms of art are presented in IBNA’s mission as elements to be coordinated and combined with state oversight: As ‘la institución nacionalista *por excelencia*,’ the State’s role in the process would be to pursue: ‘I. El desarrollo de un arte propio. II. El conocimiento del arte universal. III. La protección del arte nacional’ ‘I. The development of its own characteristic art. II. The knowledge of universal art. III. The protection of national art’ (Ibid). As Cohn’s study shows, Mead’s distinction of “the national” and “the universal” as two diametrical options for artists is

somewhat spurious; however, both Cohn and Mead coincide in pointing to the circulation of these concepts – the particular and the foreign – as key and discrete in the artistic and political formulations of the time. In contrast, Paz’s particular translation of Goya into the 1956 *La hija de Rappaccini* identifies a process of literary (re)production through two notable changes to the original title of Goya’s etching: the reduction of “el sueño de la razón” to “la razón,” and the replacement of the verb “produce” with “cría.” An analysis of these transformations provides a view into the altered definition of literary inheritance articulated in Paz’s *La hija de Rappaccini*.

Firstly, Paz replaces the ambiguous “el sueño de la razón” with “la razón.” As John Ciofalo notes, the phrase “el sueño de la razón” can be read as “the sleep of reason” that entails the Enlightenment intellectual’s abandonment of his right mind to madness; or alternatively, “el sueño de la razón” may be interpreted as the substantive dream or nightmare of reason, realized as a *reductio ad absurdum* of the same Enlightenment intellectual’s belief in the power of reason to better the world (423).¹⁵ The double meaning of Goya’s title succinctly sketches the intellectual and political milieu of a transitional Spain at the end of the 18th century, when the brief tenure of Enlightenment ideals under Charles III disappeared with his death in 1788.¹⁶ Furthermore, the double meaning of “el sueño de la razón” is prophetic, and will come to reflect not only the unreasonably decadent “madness” of the final years of Bourbon Spain, but also the disastrous resurfacing of reasonable Enlightenment principles in the form of the Napoleonic

¹⁵ In this particular article, “Goya’s Enlightenment Protagonist: A Quixotic Dreamer of Reason,” Ciofalo examines this latter interpretation in-depth, and notes its relation to Cervantes’s *Don Quixote* (426).

¹⁶ This particular change is cited by Roy Boland, who consequently asserts that the figure in Goya’s “El sueño” may be Gaspar Melchor Jovellanos (1744-1811), “the quintessential man of the Enlightenment,” who had played a major role in instating reforms under Charles III (97).

invasions beginning in 1808. In Goya's portrayal, both abandonment of and adherence to reason produce monsters.

More than one hundred years later, Paz's Baglioni misremembers the periphrastic signification of Goya's wording, removing its plasticity and instead applying an unequivocal denunciation of "la razón." Consequently, the introduction of a peninsular Spanish artist into a play derived (proximately) from the United States is adjusted to a tone that is more appropriate to some of Hawthorne's admonitory interjections. Baglioni's condemnation conflicts with Paz's more nuanced portrayal of Rappaccini, and instead resonates with the suspicion evinced in Hawthorne's character. However, if we recall the particular kind of ambiguity that Paz employs in his drama, we can see that same ambiguity at work in this rewriting of Goya. As noted, the circumscribed fates of Paz's characters highlight their ambiguous moral status as a result of their determined theatrical and rewritten roles. This same tension channels Paz's rereading of Goya's title into simpler terms that do not erase the ambiguity of the phrase "el sueño de la razón," but rather highlight the implied alternatives of the original as spurious. Accordingly, literary inheritance in *La hija de Rappaccini* is constrained, not by a discrete relationship to its proximate and remote sources, but by the conflation of iteration and inversion that underlies the process of rewriting.

This conflation is also manifest through the signification of material objects in Paz's rewriting. In the 1844 "Rappaccini's Daughter," minute descriptions of material objects demarcate the physical and literary space(s) of the story, crafting literary and moral inheritance through references to classical mythology, typology, Dante's *Commedia*, and the repertoire of Hawthorne's French heteronym. In Paz's *La hija de Rappaccini*, superabundant materiality and its accompanying opportunity for forgetting is distilled into the image of reflection that

dominates Paz's 1956 version of the play.¹⁷ One of the results of this mirroring is, as mentioned earlier, the ambiguously chiasmic presentation of characters. As a further example, we can consider how Hawthorne's scriptural allusions are compounded in Paz's *Rappaccini*: although still a scientist who alters nature and creates his own Eden, his final line, "Hija, ¿por qué me has abandonado?" 'Daughter, why have you abandoned me?' identifies Rappaccini with his redemptive counterpart, Christ at the moment of his death in Matthew 27:46 (26).¹⁸ Similarly, while Hawthorne introduces "Rappaccini's Daughter" through a critique of Aubépine's "unfortunate position" among contemporary writers and a detailed catalogue of his publications, Paz's Prologue is spoken by the narrative figure El Mensajero [the Messenger], "personaje hermafrodita vestido como las figuras del Tarot, pero sin copiar a ninguna en particular" 'hermaphroditic character, dressed like Tarot figures, but without copying any one in particular' (4). Through this character, who also serves as a narrative voice, the traceable transatlanticism of Aubépine's texts and the story's Italian setting is converted into a universal mirror, in which "los dos géneros, los tres tiempos, las cuatro edades y los cuatro puntos cardinales convergen en mí y en mí se disuelven" 'two genders, three times, four ages and the four cardinal points converge and dissolve in me' (4). The Messenger's introductory reflective language is duplicated in the physical scenery of the play, which is sparsely prescribed in stage directions except for the "gran espejo cubierto de polvo" [large dust-covered mirror] that is placed in Juan's room, which

¹⁷Richard Sterne notes that "Hawthorne is particularly concerned to contrast the heavenly purity of water with the earthly impurity of the poisonous shrub; Paz, to oppose the idea of 'the other shore,' where mortal contradictions are resolved, to that of the mirror – a symbol of the imprisoned self" (236-237).

¹⁸About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?" that is, "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?"

replaces the parallel forged in Hawthorne's text between Giovanni's lodgings and connection to the *Inferno*.¹⁹

This symbolic replacement of Giovanni's material inheritance with reflection highlights a critical attention to repetition that is distinct from the emphasis on provenance in Hawthorne. One of the most striking examples of reflection in the imagery of the play occurs in Scene V. In a sequence that is voiced by El Mensajero and simultaneously acted out by Juan, the former directs:

¡Regresa a tu infancia! No, cada vez te alejas más de los paisajes familiares.
 Marchas por una ciudad labrada en cristal de roca. Tienes sed y la sed engendra delirios geométricos. Perdido en los corredores transparentes, recorres plazas circulares, explanadas donde obeliscos melancólicos custodian fuentes de mercurio, calles que desembocan en la misma calle. Las paredes de cristal se cierran y te aprisionan; tu imagen se repite mil veces en mil espejos que se repiten mil veces en otros mil espejos. Condenado a no salir de ti mismo, condenado a buscarte en las galerías transparentes, siempre a la vista, siempre inalcanzable: ese que está ahí, frente a ti, que te mira con ojos de súplica pidiéndote una señal, un signo de fraternidad y conocimiento, no eres tú, sino tu imagen. (11)

¹⁹ Here I am referring to elements of the scenery as they are described in the 1956 publication. In contrast, the scenery used in the 1956 production was designed by Leonora Carrington, and Emilio Carballido notes that “[e]l estilo surrealista de la Carrington daba un tono alegórico a la obra, adecuado para Hawthorne tal vez, para su mundo moral, pero no para el mundo mágico de Paz” [Carrington's surrealist style gave an allegorical tone to the work, adequate for Hawthorne perhaps, for his moral world, but not for the magic world of Paz] (236).

Return to your childhood! No, you move farther and farther away from familiar landscapes. You walk through a city carved out of rock crystal. You are thirsty and your thirst engenders geometric deliriums. Lost in the transparent corridors, you run through circular plazas, esplanades on which melancholy obelisks guard fountains of mercury, streets that flow into the same street. The crystal walls close and imprison you; your image repeats itself a thousand times in a thousand mirrors that repeat themselves a thousand times in another thousand mirrors. Condemned not to come out of yourself, condemned to search for yourself in transparent galleries, always in sight, always unattainable: that which is there, in front of you, that looks at you with a look of supplication begging for a signal, a sign of fraternity and recognition, you are not yourself, but your image.

In this scene, the language of provenance, “¡regresa a tu infancia!” is replaced by a description of location in which image and architecture are consubstantial, but neither is recognizable as the subject (no eres tú, sino tu imagen). This rupture relates fundamentally to Paz’s reading of Goya as both inheritance and iteration in *La hija de Rappaccini*. In “El sueño de la razón produce monstruos,” the agent of the verb “produce” is both the absence of enlightened reason and its realization in the figures present in the engraving: a man sleeping (or dreaming) and the monstrous creatures approaching (or being engendered by) him. In contrast, through Paz’s alteration, “la razón” that produces monsters is an abstract concept, divorced from a sleeping or dreaming agent in the same way that Juan is divorced from his reflected images in the passage cited above.

The separation between Juan and his image refracted through the “ciudad labrada en cristal de roca” focalizes Paz’s adaptation through materiality, this time, in the literary genealogy of Juan as an iteration of the traditional Don Juan figure. Don Juan, the destructively amorous protagonist who appears variously in works by authors such as Tirso de Molina, Molière, Carlo Goldoni, Mozart, Lord Byron, Aleksandr Pushkin, and José Zorrilla²⁰ is certainly another hereditary precursor to Hawthorne’s Giovanni and to Paz’s Juan. But Paz’s “ciudad” specifically refigures the implications of that literary inheritance in terms whose materiality resonates with both Hawthorne’s 1844 story and a particular dramatic rendering of Don Juan from 17th-century Spain.

Tirso de Molina’s ca. 1625 version of the Don Juan tale is entitled *El burlador de Sevilla y convidado de piedra* [*The Trickster of Seville and the Stone Guest*]. “El burlador,” is Don Juan Tenorio, who, after seducing four women in Italy and in Spain, dies when he is invited to dine at the sepulcher of a man he has killed (Don Gonzalo, father to one of the women). According to the testimony of Don Juan’s servant, Catalinón, Don Juan’s fate was realized because Don Gonzalo “a cenar le convidó” ‘invited him to dine’ at his stone grave (3. 1.283). The significance of the title then, is a proleptic conflation of the two aspects of Don Juan: alive, he is the rogue trickster who shuns warnings about his morality and deceives for pleasure, but in accepting the invitation of Don Gonzalo’s ghost to dine at his sepulcher, Don Juan becomes “el convidado de piedra,” the guest and victim of stone. In Hawthorne’s “Rappaccini’s Daughter,” two crucial representations of Giovanni’s inherited choice are likewise written in stone: the castle in which

²⁰ Tirso de Molina’s ca. 1625 *El burlador de Sevilla y convidado de Piedra* will be discussed here. See also Molière’s 1665 *Dom Juan ou le Festin de pierre*, Carlo Goldoni’s 1736 play *Don Giovanni Tenorio o sia Il dissoluto*, Mozart’s 1787 opera *Don Giovanni*, Byron’s 1821 poem *Don Juan*, Pushkin’s 1830 play *Каменный гость* (*Kamenny Ghost*), and José Zorrilla’s 1844 drama *Don Juan Tenorio*.

he has his lodgings and the “grotesque” gargoyle-like figure of Lisabetta when she leads him into the garden (552). On the other hand, the confusion of rock and reflection in the city described by El Mensajero, as well as Paz’s manipulated Goya citation, recognize literary predecessors at the same time as they challenge the relationship between the notions of inheritance and circumscription. Paz’s *La hija de Rappaccini*, is, like the city described, both the discrete product of its accumulated literary precedents and a rewriting of them, a speculum that reproduces (as it inverts) its antecedents.

In addition to modifying Goya’s original phrase “el sueño de la razón,” Paz revises the verb “producir” and Baglioni avers that reason “cría,” rears or breeds monsters, again reinterpreting Goya in order to revise Hawthorne. Thematically, this revision affects what Anna Brickhouse notes in the artificial mixture that composes Rappaccini’s garden.²¹ However, the ambiguity of Paz’s recreation subverts the binary opposition between the natural and the artificial, the pure and the heterogeneous, in his characterization of Rappaccini’s work as that of “raising” and “breeding” instead of the more clearly synthetic “producing.” The shift from typifying Rappaccini’s trespass as man-made to systemic foregrounds a process of *poiesis* that reflects the peculiarity of genre in Paz’s “Rappaccini’s Daughter” and reinforces the problematic of inheritance and iteration in terms of the process of rewriting.

²¹ According to Brickhouse, the garden is one of the ethical targets of Hawthorne’s piece because the doctor’s amoral experimentation privileges progress over purity, even if that progress is artificially introduced (231).

Trama and Drama: Rewriting “Rappaccini’s Daughter”

As mentioned, *La hija de Rappaccini* is the only play written by Paz, who is generally considered a poet and essayist. Yet a notable feature of this theatrical piece is its poetic language, through which it is both *Poesía en voz alta – Poetry out loud* – and drama poeticized. This dramatic orientation itself blends organizational modes of classical Greek theater and dance-like sequences derived from the Japanese Noh tradition. In the occidental tradition, El Mensajero is Mercury, literally “the messenger” of the play. Emilio Carballido asserts that this figure also functions as the chorus of Paz’s play in the delivery of the prologue, epilogue, and intermittent narrations (235). Anhalt too describes El Mensajero as a conflation of classical tradition with the form of Japanese Noh:

El mensajero se vincula con el *waki* o deuteragonista pues éste, al hacer su presentación, se refiere siempre en su monólogo a un hecho romántico-trágico: se ubica ante el público y es quien le informa en voz alta de lo que sucede. (287)

The messenger is linked with the *waki* or deuteragonist as the latter, upon making his presentation, always refers in his monologue to a romantic and tragic occurrence: he stands in front of the public and is the one who informs [the audience] out loud about what happens.

This “romantic and tragic occurrence” is explained by El Mensajero at the end of the prologue as “el encuentro libremente aceptado, fatalmente elegido” ‘the encounter freely accepted, fatally chosen’ (5). This line defines both the space of the play, because the Messenger embodies that space of encounter (“el lugar del encuentro”), and refers to its central conflict, the meeting of

Juan and Beatriz. Poetically, the description again constitutes a chiasmus, this time conceptually transforming “free choice” and “accepted fate” into “chosen fate” and “free acceptance.” This internally reflective structure is a microcosm of the play, highlighting both the scripted nature of the story as a drama and its circumscription as a rewriting the many well-known plots (in Spanish, *tramas*).

In this sense, such circumscription works against analogizing *El Mensajero* with the classical Greek chorus. The chorus brought to Greek drama a second actor in the works of Aeschylus, infusing it with a dialogic element that heightens the ambiguity of enacted plot and underscores the artifice of theatricality through *parabasis*. In contrast, Paz’s *El Mensajero* closes the play by saying “ayer y mañana no existen: todo es hoy, todo está aquí, presente. Lo que pasó, está pasando todavía” ‘yesterday and tomorrow do not exist: everything is today, everything is here, present. What happened is happening still’ (26). Thus, instead of echoing the distinctions made by the Greek chorus between circumscribed fiction and its consciously dramatic representation, *El Mensajero* conflates the story’s foregone ending with a universal process of repetition that is not even being “acted out,” but delivered and already preterit.

The enclosed garden, the presence of the mirror in Juan’s apartment and dream sequence, and the figure of *El Mensajero* itself all gesture towards a figuration of inheritance and iteration that challenge the kind of discrete relationship that critics such as Fausto Vega would delineate between literary work and nationalistic agendas. Rather, Paz’s *La hija de Rappaccini* sounds out the basic parameters of the debate between/surrounding local and foreign influence by revising the terms that formulations of these debates employ. The intertextual and internal reflectivity of “*Rappaccini’s Daughter*” makes identity politics insurmountably tempered by the process of rewriting. As evinced through the particular treatment that Paz’s *La hija de Rappaccini* makes of

Hawthorne, Goya, and the traditions of both the poisonous woman and the seductive Don Juan, rewriting is composed of structures and allusions that are reflective but distorted in relation to the precursors and authors who (would) engender them. The extent to which “identity” could be incorporated into this discursive practice is therefore always bounded by the identifiable nature of what is being rewritten and the notion of “reiteration” implied by the term.

In this manner, in both the 19th-century United States and 20th-century Mexico, rewritings of “Rappaccini’s Daughter” reveal the ironies of contemporary concerns regarding the writing of hemispheric identity in contrast to European and universal influences. Although their constructions of the tale are distinct, both Hawthorne and Paz utilize the politics and aesthetics of rewriting in order to problematize the grounds on which the possibilities of creating patently “national literature” could be articulated during their respective eras. Paz’s *La hija de Rappaccini* becomes a “thrice-told tale” in his 1956 play. Moreover, through the particularities of his rewriting, the drama alters concepts of “characteristic,” “national,” and “universal” as they relate to widespread discussions of artistic influences in Mexico. In *Revista Mexicana de literatura*, the literary magazine that published *La hija de Rappaccini*, articles such as those of Vega propose identifiable and discrete relationships between these concepts. While artists, critics, and state institutions such as IBNA would variously construe the particular ratio of local, foreign, and universal influences that should inform the literary projects of the Mexican intelligentsia, such a construal presupposes traceable difference between these influences and their distinctness as options. Paz’s rewriting challenges such apparent alternatives through a drama that undermines the possibility of choice, conflating influence and circumscription in his version of *La hija de Rappaccini*. A century earlier, Hawthorne’s text had posed a similar challenge to the nationalist agenda of *The United States Democratic Review*: while the magazine championed the

abandonment of British models in favor of a hypothetical autochthony specific to the United States, Hawthorne not only overtly departed from his “New England sources” in casting “Rappaccini’s Daughter” as an imported French translation, but also illustrated the inherent paradox of “rewriting history”: the multiple inheritances of each character in his story are such that in their decisions to forget these influences, they end in fulfilling and repeating precedents.

In the midst of two self-reflective moments regarding the political and cultural formations of the United States and Mexico, rewriting is the critical concept that incorporates as it contests the problems of creating (and recreating) “American literature.” The rewritings of “Rappaccini’s Daughter” embody the hemispheric and nationalistic anxieties concerning tradition, invention, originality, and particularity and foreground the essential irony of these anxieties: that is, that they are in and of themselves rewritings of the paradoxical “New World” denomination of Columbus. As a consequence, the rewriting in, of, and about the Americas becomes not only a means of articulating the politics and aesthetics of American literature, but its fundamental condition.

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Education

The Pennsylvania State University 2006-2010
B.A./M.A. candidate, Comparative Literature with a minor in Spanish

Universidad de Buenos Aires, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras 4.2009-6.2009

Work Experience

Research Assistant, Department of Comparative Literature 1.2010-5.2010; 9.2010-Present

Peer Tutor, Undergraduate Writing Center 2.2007-Present

Acquisitions Intern, Penn State Press 5.2008-11.2008; 9.2009-6.2010

Collection Development Research Assistant, Penn State University Libraries 9.2007-5.2008

Publications

“Revivification and Re-vision: Horacio Quiroga’s Reading of Poe.” *The Comparatist*. Forthcoming in 2011.

Conference Presentations

“Revivification and Re-vision: Horacio Quiroga’s Reading of Poe,” ACLA, New Orleans, 1 April 2010

Honors, Awards, and Grants

Undergraduate Summer Discovery Grant in support of travel and research for the project “Jorge Amado’s Penn State Lectures: Brazilian and U.S. literature in contact and comparison” (Office of Undergraduate Education, Penn State), May 2010 (\$2,500)

John W. White Scholarship for Excellence in Spanish (Department of Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese, Penn State), April 2010 (\$1,080)

Departmental Travel Funding Award to support expenses associated with ACLA conference presentation (Department of Comparative Literature, Penn State), Spring 2010 (\$450)

Academic Excellence Scholarship, The Schreyer Honors College, 2006-2010

Evan Pugh Junior Award, 2009

The President Sparks Award, 2008

The President's Freshman Award, 2007

Teaching Experience

TA for Dr. Judy Ozment in course "Leadership Jumpstart." Fall 2007, Fall 2008, Fall 2009

Service

Language Tutor Volunteer, State College Area School District Adult Education program, 9.2007-4.2008;
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B.A./M.A. representative for ILLGO (International Languages & Literatures Graduate Organization),
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Member of Selection Committee for University Undergraduate Teaching Awards, 12.2009-1.2010

IES Study Abroad student council representative in Buenos Aires, Argentina, 3.2009-6.2009

Student Mentor, Schreyer Honors Orientation, Fall 2007