

VISIONS OF DARKNESS

By the early 1800's, life for many Americans had moved beyond mere day-to-day survival. The British had been defeated, the frontier pushed back, and living conditions improved. Interest in leisure pursuits such as reading and writing increased. People had more time to pause and reflect.

When some American writers of this



period examined human nature, they found darkness, evil, and greed. In the process they also created and developed the modern short story form. As you read the following selections, consider how the horror stories and murder mysteries of today draw on the same fascination with the dark side of the human soul.

DR. HEIDEGGER'S EXPERIMENT

*An elderly scientist discovers the
Fountain of Youth*

fiction by Nathaniel Hawthorne

page 195

THE SEARCH FOR THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

Scientists explore the mysteries of aging

nonfiction

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THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM

A man suffers diabolical torture

fiction by Edgar Allan Poe

page 212

THE MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH

Can anyone escape death?

fiction by Edgar Allan Poe

page 227

THE RAVEN

*A tormented man gets a frightening
midnight visitor*

poetry by Edgar Allan Poe

page 235

MIRIAM

A widow meets a disturbing child

fiction by Truman Capote

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from DANSE MACABRE

What frightens you?

nonfiction by Stephen King

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Fiction

Dr. Heidegger's Experiment

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

Examine What You Know

What products or techniques have you seen advertised that promise to make people younger? Brainstorm with your classmates and come up with a list. Discuss what your findings say about our society's attitudes toward youth and aging. Compare today's attitudes with those in the story.

Expand Your Knowledge

You may have heard about Ponce de León (Pän' sā dā' lā ōn'), the Spanish explorer who traveled throughout Florida searching for a mysterious "fountain of youth." People thought that this fountain would make old people young again. Although the fountain was a myth, the search for solutions to the problems of aging has gone on throughout history. During the Middle Ages, alchemists, early chemists who mixed science with magic, sought the "elixir of life," a substance they believed would prolong life indefinitely.

Enrich Your Reading

An **allegory** is a work of literature in which people, objects, and events stand for abstract qualities such as evil, compassion, or greed. Allegories are written not only to entertain but to teach a lesson or moral principle. Identify the quality or idea each of the four guests in the story represents. Draw a chart similar to the one below and complete it as you read the story.

Character	What Was Lost	When Given a Second Chance	What Each Character Might Symbolize
Mr. Medbourne	wealth	schemes to make money again	greed
Col. Killigrew			
Mr. Gascoigne			
Widow Wycherly			

■ A biography of the author can be found on page 211.

Dr. Heidegger's Experiment

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

- T**hat very singular man, old Dr. Heidegger, once invited four venerable friends to meet him in his study. There were three white-bearded gentlemen, Mr. Medbourne, Colonel Killigrew, and
- 5 Mr. Gascoigne, and a withered gentlewoman, whose name was the Widow Wycherly. They were all melancholy old creatures, who had been unfortunate in life, and whose greatest misfortune it was that they were not long ago in their graves.
- 10 Mr. Medbourne, in the vigor of his age, had been a prosperous merchant, but had lost his all by a frantic speculation and was now little better than a mendicant. Colonel Killigrew had wasted his best years, and his health and substance, in the pursuit of sinful pleasures,
- 15 which had given birth to a brood of pains, such as the gout and divers other torments of soul and body. Mr. Gascoigne was a ruined politician, a man of evil fame, or at least had been so till time had buried him from the knowledge of the present generation and made him
- 20 obscure instead of infamous. As for the Widow Wycherly, tradition tells us that she was a great beauty in her day; but, for a long while past, she had lived in deep seclusion, on account of certain scandalous stories which had prejudiced the gentry of the town against her.
- 25 It is a circumstance worth mentioning that each of these three old gentlemen, Mr. Medbourne, Colonel Killigrew, and Mr. Gascoigne, were early lovers of the Widow Wycherly, and had once been on the point of cutting each

GUIDE FOR READING

1 *singular*: unique; strange or odd.

10-24 Notice what each of the four characters has lost.

12 *mendicant* (men' di kent): a beggar.

16 *gout* (gout): an inflammatory disease once thought to be caused by, eating too much rich food.

24 *gentry*: people with high social rank.

Words to Know and Use

venerable (ven' er e bel) *adj.* worthy of respect by reason of age, dignity, character
vigor (vig' er) *n.* active physical or mental force or strength; vitality
obscure (eb skyoor') *adj.* not well-known
infamous (in' fe mas) *adj.* having a bad reputation
seclusion (si klōō' zhən) *n.* being shut off or kept apart from others; isolation

30 other's throats for her sake. And, before proceeding further, I will merely hint that Dr. Heidegger and all his four guests were sometimes thought to be a little beside themselves—as is not unfrequently the case with old people, when worried either by present troubles or woeful recollections.

35 “My dear old friends,” said Dr. Heidegger, motioning them to be seated, “I am desirous of your assistance in one of those little experiments with which I amuse myself here in my study.”

40 If all stories were true, Dr. Heidegger's study must have been a very curious place. It was a dim, old-fashioned chamber, festooned with cobwebs and besprinkled with antique dust. Around the walls stood several oaken bookcases, the lower shelves of which were filled with rows of gigantic folios and black-letter quartos, and the upper
45 with little parchment-covered duodecimos. Over the central bookcase was a bronze bust of Hippocrates, with which, according to some authorities, Dr. Heidegger was accustomed to hold consultations in all difficult cases of his practice. In the obscurest corner of the room stood a
50 tall and narrow oaken closet with its door ajar, within which doubtfully appeared a skeleton. Between two of the bookcases hung a looking glass, presenting its high and dusty plate within a tarnished gilt frame. Among many wonderful stories related of this mirror, it was fabled that
55 the spirit of all the doctor's deceased patients dwelt within its verge and would stare him in the face whenever he looked thitherward. The opposite side of the chamber was ornamented with the full-length portrait of a young lady, arrayed in the faded magnificence of silk, satin, and
60 brocade, and with a visage as faded as her dress. Above half a century ago, Dr. Heidegger had been on the point of marriage with this young lady; but being affected with some slight disorder, she had swallowed one of her lover's prescriptions and died on the bridal evening.

65 The greatest curiosity of the study remains to be mentioned; it was a ponderous folio volume, bound in black leather, with massive silver clasps. There were no letters on the back, and nobody could tell the title of the book. But it was well known to be a book of magic; and once,
70 when a chambermaid had lifted it, merely to brush away the dust, the skeleton had rattled in its closet, the picture



39–64 In the following passage, Hawthorne describes the ancient, strange study in detail. Notice how the setting sets the mood for the story.

41 festooned: adorned with flowers, material, etc., in a draping curve.

44–45 folios . . . quartos . . . duodecimos: different sizes of books.

46 Hippocrates (hi pāk' rə tēz'): 460?–377? B.C.; a Greek physician; the father of medicine.

52–57 This is no ordinary mirror. Watch what it reveals as the story continues.

57 thitherward: toward it.

60 visage (viz' ij): facial appearance.

of the young lady had stepped one foot upon the floor, and several ghastly faces had peeped forth from the mirror; while the brazen head of Hippocrates frowned and said, "Forbear!"

75

Such was Dr. Heidegger's study. On the summer afternoon of our tale, a small round table, as black as ebony, stood in the center of the room, sustaining a cut-glass vase of beautiful form and elaborate workmanship. The sunshine came through the window, between the heavy festoons of two faded damask curtains, and fell directly across this vase; so that a mild splendor was reflected from it on the ashen visages of the five old people who sat around. Four champagne glasses were also on the table.

80

"My dear old friends," repeated Dr. Heidegger, "may I reckon on your aid in performing an exceedingly curious experiment?"

85

Now Dr. Heidegger was a very strange old gentleman, whose eccentricity had become the nucleus for a thousand fantastic stories. Some of these fables, to my shame be it spoken, might possibly be traced back to my own veracious self; and if any passages of the present tale should startle the reader's faith, I must be content to bear the stigma of a fictionmonger.

90

When the doctor's four guests heard him talk of his proposed experiment, they anticipated nothing more wonderful than the murder of a mouse in an air pump, or the examination of a cobweb by the microscope, or some similar nonsense, with which he was constantly in the habit of pestering his intimates. But, without waiting for a reply, Dr. Heidegger hobbled across the chamber and returned with the same ponderous folio, bound in black leather, which common report affirmed to be a book of magic. Undoing the silver clasps, he opened the volume and took from among its black-letter pages a rose, or what was once a rose, though now the green leaves and crimson petals had assumed one brownish hue, and the ancient flower seemed ready to crumble to dust in the doctor's hands.

100

105

"This rose," said Dr. Heidegger, with a sigh, "this same withered and crumbling flower, blossomed five and fifty years ago. It was given me by Sylvia Ward, whose portrait hangs yonder; and I meant to wear it in my bosom at our

110

75 **forbear**: stop; control yourself.

91 **veracious**: honest.

90-94 The narrator admits to having told fables about Dr. Heidegger in the past.

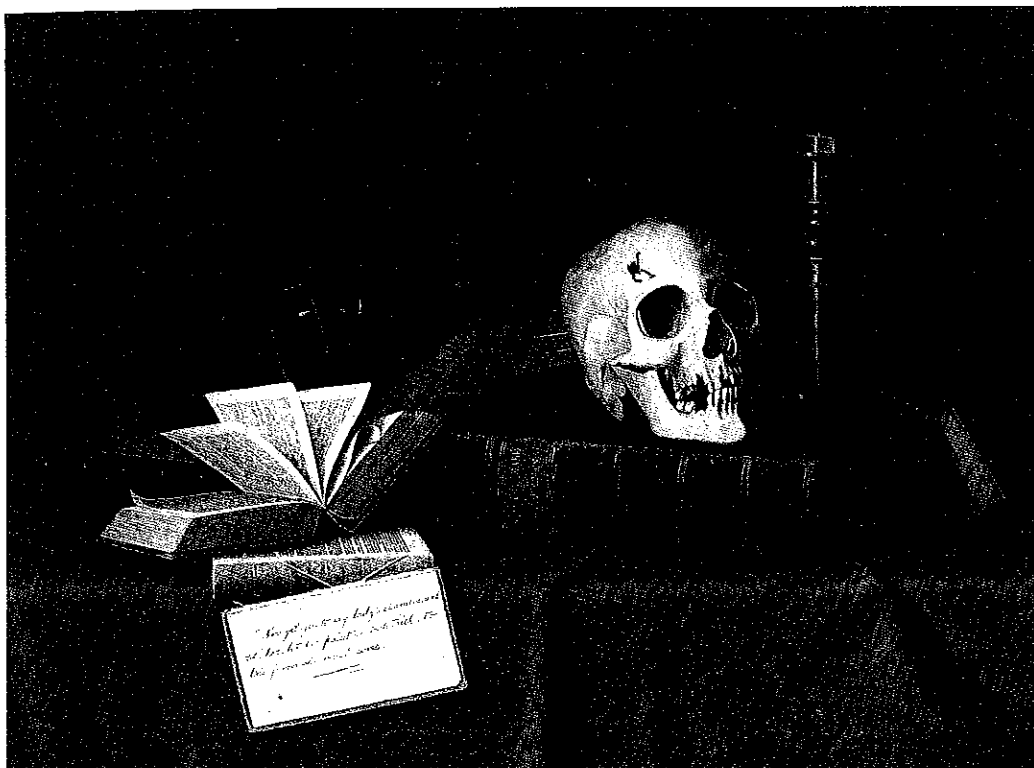
94 **fictionmonger**: a liar.

100 **intimates**: close friends.

106 **crimson**: deep red in color.

**Words
to Know
and Use**

eccentricity (ek' sen tris' ə tē) *n.* the state of being unconventional or odd
stigma (stig' mə) *n.* a mark of disgrace



MEMENTO MORI—"TO THIS FAVOR" 1879 William Harnett
The Cleveland Museum, Ohio Mr. and Mrs. William H. Marlatt Fund.

wedding. Five and fifty years it has been treasured between the leaves of this old volume. Now, would you
115 deem it possible that this rose of half a century could ever bloom again?"

"Nonsense!" said the Widow Wycherly, with a peevish toss of her head. "You might as well ask whether an old woman's wrinkled face could ever bloom again."

117 *peevish*: irritable; impatient.

120 "See!" answered Dr. Heidegger.

123 *imbibe*: to absorb.

He uncovered the vase and threw the rose into the water which it contained. At first, it lay lightly on the surface of the fluid, appearing to imbibe none of its moisture. Soon, however, a singular change began to be
125 visible. The crushed and dried petals stirred and assumed a deepening tinge of crimson, as if the flower were reviving from a deathlike slumber; the slender stalk and twigs of foliage became green; and there was the rose of half a century, looking as fresh as when Sylvia Ward had first
130 given it to her lover. It was scarcely full blown; for some of its delicate red leaves curled modestly around its moist bosom, within which two or three dewdrops were sparkling.

135 "That is certainly a very pretty deception," said the doctor's friends; carelessly, however, for they had witnessed greater miracles at a conjurer's show; "pray how was it effected?"

140 "Did you never hear of the 'Fountain of Youth'?" asked Dr. Heidegger, "which Ponce de León, the Spanish adventurer, went in search of two or three centuries ago?"

"But did Ponce de León ever find it?" said the Widow Wycherly.

145 "No," answered Dr. Heidegger, "for he never sought it in the right place. The famous Fountain of Youth, if I am rightly informed, is situated in the southern part of the Floridian peninsula, not far from Lake Macaco. Its source is overshadowed by several gigantic magnolias, which, though numberless centuries old, have been kept as fresh as violets by the virtues of this wonderful water. An acquaintance of mine, knowing my curiosity in such matters, 150 has sent me what you see in the vase."

"Ahem!" said Colonel Killigrew, who believed not a word of the doctor's story; "and what may be the effect of this fluid on the human frame?"

155 "You shall judge for yourself, my dear colonel," replied Dr. Heidegger; "and all of you, my respected friends, are welcome to so much of this admirable fluid as may restore to you the bloom of youth. For my own part, having had much trouble in growing old, I am in no hurry to grow 160 young again. With your permission, therefore, I will merely watch the progress of the experiment."

While he spoke, Dr. Heidegger had been filling the four champagne glasses with the water of the Fountain of Youth. It was apparently impregnated with an effervescent gas, for little bubbles were continually ascending 165 from the depths of the glasses and bursting in silvery spray at the surface. As the liquor diffused a pleasant perfume, the old people doubted not that it possessed cordial and comfortable properties; and though utter skeptics as to its rejuvenescent power, they were inclined to swallow it 170 at once. But Dr. Heidegger besought them to stay a moment.

"Before you drink, my respectable old friends," said he, "it would be well that, with the experience of a lifetime to

136 **conjurer:** a magician.

139 **Ponce de León:** 1460?-1521; the Spanish explorer who discovered Florida.

158-161 Dr. Heidegger does not want to become young again. *What do you think of his reasons?*

164 **impregnated:** filled.

168 **cordial** (kôr' jəl): invigorating.

170 **rejuvenescent** (ri jōō' ve nes' ənt): making to feel or seem young again.

173-180 Dr. Heidegger is giving his guests a warning and suggesting that they learn from their past experiences.

**Words
to Know
and Use**

effervescent (ef' ə ves' ənt) *adj.* bubbling
skeptic (skep' tik) *n.* a person who doubts

175 direct you, you should draw up a few general rules for
your guidance, in passing a second time through the per-
ils of youth. Think what a sin and shame it would be if,
with your peculiar advantages, you should not become
patterns of virtue and wisdom to all the young people of
180 the age!"

The doctor's four venerable friends made him no an-
swer, except by a feeble and tremulous laugh; so very
ridiculous was the idea that, knowing how closely repen-
tance treads behind the steps of error, they should
185 ever go astray again.

"Drink, then," said the doctor, bowing. "I rejoice that I
have so well selected the subjects of my experiment."

With palsied hands, they raised the glasses to their lips.
The liquor, if it really possessed such virtues as Dr.
190 Heidegger imputed to it, could not have been bestowed
on four human beings who needed it more woefully.
They looked as if they had never known what youth or
pleasure was, but had been the offspring of Nature's
dotage, and always the gray, decrepit, sapless, miserable
195 creatures who now sat stooping round the doctor's table,
without life enough in their souls or bodies to be ani-
mated even by the prospect of growing young again.
They drank off the water and replaced their glasses on
the table.

200 Assuredly, there was an almost immediate improvement
in the aspect of the party, not unlike what might have
been produced by a glass of generous wine, together with
a sudden glow of cheerful sunshine brightening over all
their visages at once. There was a healthful suffusion on
205 their cheeks, instead of the ashen hue that had made
them look so corpselike. They gazed at one another and
fancied that some magic power had really begun to
smooth away the deep and sad inscriptions which Father
Time had been so long engraving on their brows. The
210 Widow Wycherly adjusted her cap, for she felt almost like
a woman again.

"Give us more of this wondrous water!" cried they, ea-
gerly. "We are younger—but we are still too old! Quick—
give us more!"

215 "Patience, patience!" quoth Dr. Heidegger, who sat
watching the experiment with philosophic coolness. "You

181-185 The guests seem confident
that they will not repeat the errors of
their youth.

186-187 Predict what you think is the
purpose of Dr. Heidegger's experiment.

194 dotage (dōt' ij): a feeble state
due to old age.

201 aspect: appearance.

204 suffusion: glow.

206-209 Is the effect of the liquid
physical or psychological? Watch how
the narrator intentionally blurs the line
between what is real and what is an
illusion throughout the story.

**Words
to Know
and Use**

tremulous (trem' yōō les) *adj.* trembling; quivering
decrepit (dē krep' it) *adj.* worn out by old age or sickness; weak
animate (an' i māt') *v.* to bring to life, make lively, or stimulate

have been a long time growing old. Surely, you might be content to grow young in half an hour! But the water is at your service."

220 Again he filled their glasses with the liquor of youth, enough of which still remained in the vase to turn half the old people in the city to the age of their own grandchildren. While the bubbles were yet sparkling on the brim, the doctor's four guests snatched their glasses from
225 the table and swallowed the contents at a single gulp. Was it delusion? Even while the draft was passing down their throats, it seemed to have wrought a change on their whole systems. Their eyes grew clear and bright; a dark shade deepened among their silvery locks, they sat around
230 the table, three gentlemen of middle age, and a woman hardly beyond her buxom prime.

"My dear widow, you are charming!" cried Colonel Killigrew, whose eyes had been fixed upon her face, while the shadows of age were flitting from it like darkness from
235 the crimson daybreak.

The fair widow knew, of old, that Colonel Killigrew's compliments were not always measured by sober truth; so she started up and ran to the mirror, still dreading the ugly visage of an old woman would meet her gaze. Meanwhile, the three gentlemen behaved in such a manner as proved that the water of the Fountain of Youth possessed some intoxicating qualities; unless, indeed, their exhilaration of spirits were merely a lightsome dizziness caused by the sudden removal of the weight of years. Mr. Gascoigne's mind seemed to run on political topics, but
245 whether relating to the past, present, or future could not easily be determined, since the same ideas and phrases have been in vogue these fifty years. Now he rattled forth full-throated sentences about patriotism, national glory,
250 and the people's right; now he muttered some perilous stuff or other, in a sly and doubtful whisper, so cautiously that even his own conscience could scarcely catch the secret; and now, again, he spoke in measured accents and a deeply deferential tone, as if a royal ear were listening to
255 his well-turned periods.

Colonel Killigrew all this time had been trolling forth a jolly bottle song and ringing his glass in symphony with

226 Notice how the narrator questions the reality of the events.

244-272 What behaviors are exhibited immediately by the four guests once their youth is restored?

256 *trolling forth* (trōl' in fōrth): singing out heartily.

**Words
to Know
and Use**

delusion (di lōō' zhən) *n.* deception
deferential (def' er en' shəl) *adj.* extremely respectful

the chorus, while his eyes wandered toward the buxom figure of the Widow Wycherly. On the other side of the table, Mr. Medbourne was involved in a calculation of dollars and cents, with which was strangely intermingled a project for supplying the East Indies with ice, by harnessing a team of whales to the polar icebergs.

As for the Widow Wycherly, she stood before the mirror curtsying and simpering to her own image and greeting it as the friend whom she loved better than all the world beside. She thrust her face close to the glass, to see whether some long-remembered wrinkle or crow's-foot had indeed vanished. She examined whether the snow had so entirely melted from her hair that the venerable cap could be safely thrown aside. At last, turning briskly away, she came with a sort of dancing step to the table.

"My dear old doctor," cried she, "pray favor me with another glass!"

"Certainly, my dear madam, certainly!" replied the complaisant doctor; "See! I have already filled the glasses."

There, in fact, stood the four glasses, brimful of this wonderful water, the delicate spray of which, as it effervesced from the surface, resembled the tremulous glitter of diamonds. It was now so nearly sunset that the chamber had grown duskier than ever; but a mild and moonlike spendor gleamed from within the vase, and rested alike on the four guests and on the doctor's venerable figure. He sat in a high-backed, elaborately carved oaken armchair, with a gray dignity of aspect that might have well befitted that very Father Time whose power had never been disputed save by this fortunate company. Even while quaffing the third draft of the Fountain of Youth, they were almost awed by the expression of his mysterious visage.

But the next moment, the exhilarating gush of young life shot through their veins. They were now in the happy prime of youth. Age, with its miserable train of cares and sorrows and diseases, was remembered only as the troubles of a dream, from which they had joyously awakened. The fresh gloss of the soul, so early lost, and without which the world's successive scenes had been but a gallery of faded pictures, again threw its enchantment over all their prospects. They felt like new-created beings in a new-created universe.

"We are young! We are young!" they cried exultingly.

275 *complaisant* (kəm plā' zənt): willing to please.

287 *disputed*: doubted.

288 *quaffing* (kwäf' in): drinking.

Youth, like the extremity of age, had effaced the strongly marked characteristics of middle life and mutually assimilated them all. They were a group of merry youngsters, almost maddened with the exuberant frolicsomeness of their years. The most singular effect of their gaiety was an impulse to mock the infirmity and decrepitude of which they had so lately been the victims. They laughed loudly at their old-fashioned attire, the wide-skirted coats and flapped waistcoats of the young men, and the ancient cap and gown of the blooming girl. One limped across the floor like a gouty grandfather; one set a pair of spectacles astride of his nose and pretended to pore over the black-letter pages of the book of magic; a third seated himself in an armchair and strove to imitate the venerable dignity of Dr. Heidegger. Then all shouted mirthfully and leaped about the room. The Widow Wycherly—if so fresh a damsel could be called a widow—tripped up to the doctor's chair, with a mischievous merriment in her rosy face.

"Doctor, you dear old soul," cried she, "get up and dance with me!" And then the four young people laughed louder than ever, to think what a queer figure the poor old doctor would cut.

"Pray excuse me," answered the doctor quietly. "I am old and rheumatic, and my dancing days were over long ago. But either of these young gentlemen will be glad of so pretty a partner."

"Dance with me, Clara!" cried Colonel Killigrew.

"No, no, I will be her partner!" shouted Mr. Gascoigne.

"She promised me her hand, fifty years ago!" exclaimed Mr. Medbourne.

They all gathered round her. One caught both her hands in his passionate grasp—another threw his arm around her waist—the third buried his hand among the glossy curls that clustered beneath the widow's cap. Blushing, panting, struggling, chiding, laughing, her warm breath fanning each of their faces by turns, she strove to disengage herself, yet still remained in their triple embrace. Never was there a livelier picture of youthful rivalry, with bewitching beauty for the prize. Yet, by a strange deception, owing to the duskiess of the chamber

302-304 Notice how youth and old age are described.

305 *exuberant frolicsomeness*
(eg zōō' bər ənt frāl' ik sēm nēs):
high-spirited playfulness.

308-316 The guests were recently old, yet they mock old age. Have the guests paid any attention to Dr. Heidegger's warning?

317 *mirthfully*: joyfully.

326 *rheumatic*: stiff from arthritis.

339 *strove to disengage herself*:
struggled to free herself.

**Words
to Know
and Use**

efface (ə fās') v. to rub out; erase

and the antique dresses which they still wore, the tall mirror is said to have reflected the figures of the three old,
345 gray, withered grandsires ridiculously contending for the skinny ugliness of a shriveled grandam.

But they were young: their burning passions proved them so. Inflamed to madness by the coquetry of the girl-widow, who neither granted nor quite withheld her
350 favors, the three rivals began to interchange threatening glances. Still keeping hold of the fair prize, they grappled fiercely at one another's throats. As they struggled to and fro, the table was overturned, and the vase dashed into a thousand fragments. The precious Water of Youth flowed
355 in a bright stream across the floor, moistening the wings of a butterfly, which, grown old in the decline of summer, had alighted there to die. The insect fluttered lightly through the chamber and settled on the snowy head of Dr. Heidegger.

360 "Come, come, gentlemen!—come, Madam Wycherly," exclaimed the doctor, "I really must protest against this riot."

They stood still and shivered; for it seemed as if gray Time were calling them back from their sunny youth, far
365 down into the chill and darksome vale of years. They looked at old Dr. Heidegger, who sat in his carved arm-chair, holding the rose of half a century, which he had rescued from among the fragments of the shattered vase. At the motion of his hand, the four rioters resumed their
370 seats; the more readily because their violent exertions had wearied them, youthful though they were.

"My poor Sylvia's rose!" ejaculated Dr. Heidegger, holding it in the light of the sunset clouds; "it appears to be fading again."

375 And so it was. Even while the party were looking at it, the flower continued to shrivel up, till it became as dry and fragile as when the doctor had first thrown it into the vase. He shook off the few drops of moisture which clung to its petals.

380 "I love it as well thus as in its dewy freshness," observed he, pressing the withered rose to his withered lips. While he spoke, the butterfly fluttered down from the doctor's snowy head and fell upon the floor.

385 His guests shivered again. A strange chillness, whether of the body or spirit they could not tell, was creeping gradually over them all. They gazed at one another, and

343-346 Hawthorne is deliberately unclear as to whether the reflection is real or an illusion. *What does the image in the mirror reveal about the characters?*

346 *grandsires . . . grandam*: old men . . . old woman.

348 *coquetry* (kō' kə trē): flirtations.

351-352 *How does the characters' behavior in this scene compare with the behavior exhibited in their youth?*

380-381 Dr. Heidegger treasures the shriveled rose. *From this can you infer how he feels about old age?*



ROSEBUD AND PANSY REFLECTED 1987
Peggy Flora Zalucha
Collection of L. Anthony Zalucha.

fancied that each fleeting moment snatched away a charm
and left a deepening furrow where none had been before.
Was it an illusion? Had the changes of a lifetime been
390 crowded into so brief a space, and were they now four
aged people, sitting with their old friend Dr. Heidegger?

"Are we grown old again, so soon?" cried they,
dolefully.

In truth they had. The Water of Youth possessed
395 merely a virtue more transient than that of wine. The
delirium which it created had effervesced away. Yes! they
were old again. With a shuddering impulse that showed
her a woman still, the widow clasped her skinny hands be-
fore her face and wished that the coffin lid were over it,
400 since it could be no longer beautiful.

"Yes, friends, ye are old again," said Dr. Heidegger,
"and lo! the Water of Youth is all lavished on the ground.
Well—I bemoan it not; for if the fountain gushed at my
very doorstep, I would not stoop to bathe my lips in it—
405 no, though its delirium were for years instead of mo-
ments. Such is the lesson ye have taught me!"

But the doctor's four friends had taught no such lesson
to themselves. They resolved forthwith to make a pil-
grimage to Florida, and quaff at morning, noon, and
410 night, from the Fountain of Youth. ❧

388 *furrow*: wrinkle.

393 *dolefully*: sadly.

403 *bemoan*: regret.

405 *delirium* (dī līr' ē əm):
uncontrollably wild emotion.

407-408 *What is the lesson that Dr.
Heidegger has learned?*

Responding to Reading

First Impressions

1. What was your mood as the story ended? Why?

Second Thoughts

2. Discuss the descriptions of the characters on your chart. Why do you think Dr. Heidegger chose these four subjects for his experiment?

Think about

- what qualities the characters represent
- what the four guests have in common

3. Which thoughts and actions reveal that the guests have not learned from the mistakes of their youth?
4. How do the attitudes about youth and old age from your prereading discussion compare with the attitudes in the story?

Think about

- Dr. Heidegger's comments about the withered rose on page 206
- the four guests' behavior once their youth has been restored
- the guests' desire to find the Fountain of Youth

5. Even though the old people seem to look and act like youngsters, why do they appear old and withered in the mirror's reflection?
6. What lesson does this story attempt to teach?

Broader Connections

7. If people could turn back time, do you think they would make the same mistakes all over again, as Dr. Heidegger suggests? Explain.

Literary Concepts: Symbol and Foreshadowing

A **symbol** is something that has a concrete meaning in itself and also stands for, or represents, something beyond itself. For instance, Dr. Heidegger's rose represents the doctor's love for Sylvia Ward as well as the inevitable decay and death that are part of nature. Find two other objects in the story that act as symbols. Explain what you think each represents.

The use of hints or clues that prepare the reader for events that will occur later is called **foreshadowing**. For example, the former rivalry for the Widow Wycherly that is mentioned on page 196 foreshadows the rivalry that occurs again later on page 206. Look back at the story and identify two other examples of foreshadowing.