

“Dr. Heidegger’s Experiment” by Nathaniel Hawthorne

“Dr. Heidegger’s Experiment” is a short story about a typical Hawthorne scientist. The cold scientist, in Gothic writers’ estimation, violated the laws of God, nature, or human society through his actions. Such a scientist sometimes used science to explore the supernatural as well. These men cared more about reason than emotion, as evidenced by their interest in science above mankind, and that was a terrible sin in the eyes of a Romantic writer.

As you read, take notes over:

- The cold scientist
- Ambiguity (unclear events)
- Irony (verbal, situational, and dramatic)
- Romantic conflict (head vs. heart)
- Symbolism
- Characterization
- Gothic Characteristics:
 - Darkness/nighttime
 - Beautiful young woman in danger
 - Sinister villain/force
 - Exotic setting – often a decaying structure
 - Eerie atmosphere of mystery and suspense
 - Bizarre events
 - Elements of the supernatural

In class tomorrow, I will check over your notes. We will then discuss these aspects of the story as well as the allegory within the tale.