

Atkinson Center Topical Lunch

TITLE: “*Why Am I Behaving This Way Right Now?*”

Date: Friday November 18, 2016 12:00pm – 1:00pm

Host: Carolyn Goelzer, Department of Performing and Media Arts, Atkinson Center Faculty-in-Residence Fellow, Fall 2016.

As part of my Atkinson Center for a Sustainable Future Faculty-In-Residence fellowship I’m creating a play based on *Rappaccini’s Daughter*, a short story by Nathaniel Hawthorne. It’s about a girl raised in a poison garden-- the research lab of her father, a renowned medical professor at the University of Padua in 1565. My writing has been inspired, in part, by this quote from ‘What is Ethics in Research and Why is it Important?’ by David B. Resnik, J.D., PhD:

“Ethical norms are so ubiquitous that one might be tempted to regard them as simple commonsense. On the other hand, if morality were nothing more than commonsense, then why are there so many ethical disputes and issues in our society? One plausible explanation of these disagreements is that all people recognize some common ethical norms but different individuals interpret, apply, and balance these norms in different ways in light of their own values and life experiences.”

Please join me in an informal discussion that considers how a variety of circumstances may have shaped the unique perspectives, beliefs, and experiences of five featured characters in Hawthorne’s *Rappaccini’s Daughter*. How have biological, historical, societal, familial, environmental, and other factors impacted the characters' individual motives, choices and actions in ways that lead to the story’s tragic outcome?